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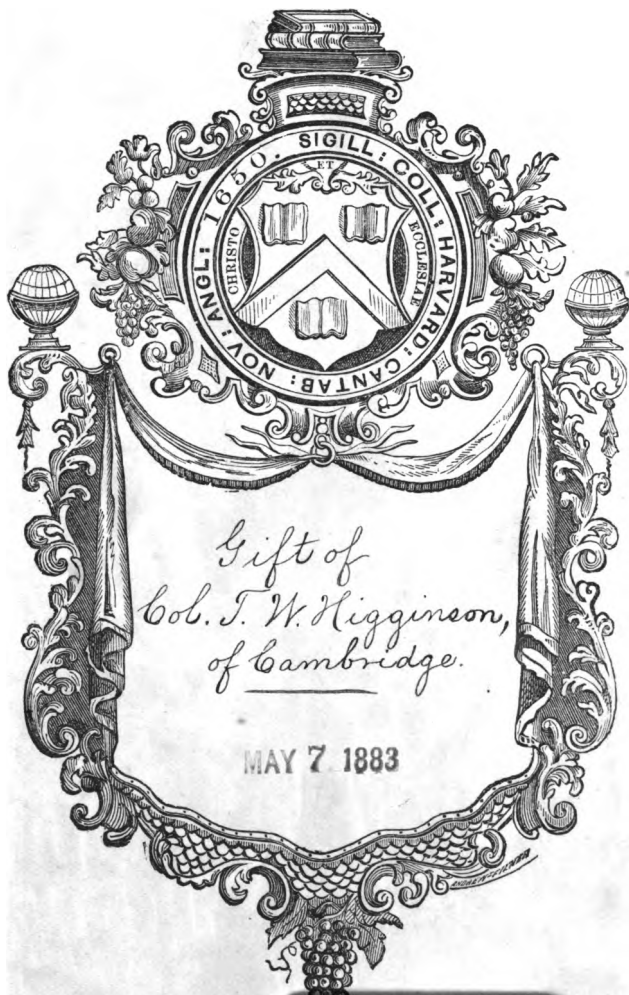
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SONGS
OF
TOIL AND TRIUMPH

BY
J. L. McCREERY

²
NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
27 & 29 WEST 23D STREET
1883

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PREFACE.

NONE of the following poems were originally written for the general public. Most of them, especially the longer ones, were meant only for my own family and a circle of intimate personal friends ; whence it results that many of them refer, to a greater extent than would otherwise be the case, and than I could wish were the case, to myself, my personal experiences, hopes, beliefs, doubts, and feelings. It would be entirely too sweeping a generalization, however, to conclude that *every thing* to be found here is a transcript of my own outer and inner life ; for instance, it would not be safe to conclude from "Such a Night as This" that I am a widower, or from "The Voiceless" that I am a woman ! Just how much of what seems personal herein is fact, and how much of it is fancy, it will be time enough to tell when I come to write my autobiography. And I have not yet begun to write my autobiography.

The first poem in the volume has been the subject of considerable controversy. It was written late in the fall of 1862, and the next spring was sent to *Arthur's Home Magazine*, Philadelphia, appearing therein in the number for July, 1863. One E. Bulmer, of Illinois, copied it, signed his own name to it, and sent it (as his own) to the

Farmers' Advocate, Chicago. The editor of some Wisconsin paper (whose name I have forgotten, if I ever knew) clipped it from the *Farmers' Advocate* for his own columns; but supposing that there was a misprint in the signature, changed the "m" therein to a "w," and thus the name of "Bulwer" became attached to the poem. An immense accession of popularity immediately followed. Copies of papers containing it—credited to Bulwer—have been sent me from nearly every State in the Union, and from England, Scotland, and Ireland; it is to be found in orthodox and spiritual hymn and song books, in at least one school reader in wide use, and in a score of bound volumes of selections; it has been quoted from in speeches in the Legislatures of several States, and several times in the Congress of the United States. On the last day of January, 1880, I had the pleasure of sitting in the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Representatives, in Washington, D. C., and hearing the Hon. Mr. Coffroth, Member of Congress from Pennsylvania, in his oration on the death of Hon. Rush Clark, Member of Congress from Iowa, quote a portion of this poem, which thus became embalmed (credited to Bulwer, as usual) in the *Congressional Record* (see 46th Cong., 2d Sess., Part 1, p. 638). Every reader can decide for himself whether this wide-spread popularity has its basis in the merits of the poem or in the celebrity of its supposed author.

In a volume of verse growing up under the circumstances which gave origin to these poems—the commonplace incidents of every-day home life, the ordinary joys and griefs of every household, the aspirations,

hopes, fears, doubts, and questions felt by every human heart, expressed in the simplest language within reach that could be woven into rhyme and rhythm, upon the impulse of the passing moment, with no ulterior purpose in view by the writer of seeking reputation or achieving recognition as a poet—of course nothing new or startling is to be expected. My Pegasus is a courser without pedigree or training, and has never been regularly entered in the race for fame ; he has been left to wander whither he chose, without provocation of spur or restraint of bridle ; and he has not aspired to climb Parnassian heights, nor to wander into unfrequented ways in search of some hitherto undiscovered Pierian fountain. He has seen fit to "browse around" in common fields, and travel in well-trodden paths—whither any reader may follow who chooses. May he not be disappointed in his hope of finding here and there by the wayside some humble flower sufficient to reward him for his trouble.

J. L. McC.

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INTRODUCTION.

‘With second-rate poetry no one ought to be allowed to trouble mankind. There is quite enough of the best—more than we can ever read in the length of a life; and it is literal sin in any person to encumber us with inferior work. All inferior poetry is injury to the good, inasmuch as it takes away from the freshness of rhymes, gives a wretched commonality to good thoughts, and in general adds to the weight of human weariness in a most woful and culpable manner.’—JOHN RUSKIN.

AN owl sat aloft on a barren limb,
Looking as wise as such birds will,
And at every sound that was wafted to him
He angrily hooted : “ Be still ! be still ! ”

“ It is well,” he said, “ for the nightingale
To laden the palpitant air with her song ;
And the voice of the lark, as she mounts from the vale,
May not, perhaps, be very far wrong ;

“ But the garrulous sparrow, the cawing crow,
The ceaseless, monotonous whippoorwill,
And a multitude more that I ’m glad I don’t know,
Oh, why can not they,” cried the critic, “ keep still ! ”

A cricket that lived at the root of the tree,
By this sort of hooting indignantly stirred,
No whit dismayed, as we 'll presently see,
Was moved to respond to the solemn old bird :

“ Not meaning to hint that an owl could usurp
A position or power not rightly his due,
Allow me to say that when I want to chirp
I shall chirp—without asking permission of you !

“ Nor thought I, moreover, what sensitive ear
In delight or disfavor my music might scan,
Save that of my Maker, who places me here,
And bids me do simply the best that I can !

“ My song is a homely affair, no doubt ;
But when my heart and throat are athrill
With a thought or a joy that I want to let out,
Though owls may complain, I will not keep still ! ”

SONGS OF TOIL AND TRIUMPH.

THERE IS NO DEATH.

THERE is no death ! the stars go down
To rise upon some other shore,
And bright in heaven's jewelled crown
They shine for evermore.

There is no death ! the forest leaves
Convert to life the viewless air ;
The rocks disorganize to feed
The hungry moss they bear.

There is no death ! the dust we tread
Shall change, beneath the summer showers,
To golden grain, or mellow fruit,
Or rainbow-tinted flowers.

There is no death ! the leaves may fall,
The flowers may fade and pass away—
They only wait, through wintry hours,
The warm, sweet breath of May.

There is no death ! the choicest gifts
That heaven hath kindly lent to earth
Are ever first to seek again
The country of their birth ;

And all things that for growth or joy
Are worthy of our love or care,
Whose loss has left us desolate,
Are safely garnered there.

Though life become a desert waste,
We know its fairest, sweetest flowers,
Transplanted into paradise,
Adorn immortal bowers.

The voice of birdlike melody
That we have missed and mourned so long
Now mingles with the angel choir
In everlasting song.

There is no death ! although we grieve
When beautiful, familiar forms
That we have learned to love are torn
From our embracing arms,—

Although with bowed and breaking heart,
With sable garb and silent tread,
We bear their senseless dust to rest,
And say that they are “ dead,”—

They are not dead ! they have but passed
Beyond the mists that blind us here,

Into the new and larger life
Of that serener sphere.

They have but dropped their robe of clay
To put their shining raiment on ;
They have not wandered far away,—
They are not “lost,” nor “gone.”

Though disenthralled and glorified,
They still are here and love us yet ;
The dear ones they have left behind
They never can forget.

And sometimes, when our hearts grow faint
Amid temptations fierce and deep,
Or when the wildly raging waves
Of grief or passion sweep,

We feel upon our fevered brow
Their gentle touch, their breath of balm,
Their arms enfold us, and our hearts
Grow comforted and calm.

And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear, immortal spirits tread—
For all the boundless universe
Is Life :—there are no dead !

THE WORLD IS WAITING.

THE blood-stained earth has had enough of warriors,
conquerors, and kings,
And in the light of better days waits hopefully for better
things ;
Those at the prestige of whose name the trembling world
was wont to bow,
Are mouldering with their kindred dust, and she would
fain forget them now ;
Her battle-fields—her Marathons and Borodinos—bear
The golden harvests that shall feed the sons of those who
perished there ;
The servile multitude no more some Cæsar or Napoleon
leads
To Actiums or Waterloos ; for greater men and grander
deeds

Humanity is waiting !

Welcome the coming golden age ; farewell the passing age
of gold,
When worth is worthless without wealth, and hearts and
souls are bought and sold ;
Men ask not of the millionaire what hath his heartless
history been—
They tarry but to trample down the helpless victim of his
sin.

But from the sunlit mountain-top, where rests e'en now a
brighter ray,
The patient Watcher welcomes glad the dawning of another day—
A day when Truth and Righteousness the sceptre of the
world shall hold,
And man live for his fellow-man, as now he lives for self
and gold :

For this the world is waiting !

For warriors undaunted, who shall battle bravely for the
right,
With weapons keen pursuing Error to her native realms
of Night ;
For rich men—rich in boundless store of cheering words
and helpful deeds,
Unfailing love, unfainting faith, to minister to human
needs ;
For poets who shall clothe the truth in robes of rare and
winsome beauty ;
For orators whose thunder tones shall rouse the laggard
to his duty ;
For men whose hearts with love to God and love to man
shall be imbued ;
For men and women who shall live the lives that *men* and
women should :

For these the world is waiting !

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW.

A WAKE, my soul—with eager zeal
Thy daily task beginning ;
For labor hath its pleasures, real,
And amply worth the winning !
What though, with toil and care oppressed,
The day seem long and dreary ?
We should not know the joy of rest.
If we were never weary.
Then up ! and banish sloth away,
Nor care nor trouble borrow ;
For patient, earnest toil to-day
Wins triumph for to-morrow.

For God designed that man should gain
His living by his labor ;
And he far worse than lives in vain
Who lives upon his neighbor.
Though lily hands and costly clothes
Are sometimes won by shirking,
Still " Nature's noblemen " are those
Who earn their bread by working.
Then up ! and banish sloth away,
With labor brave and thorough ;
For those too proud to work to-day
May beggars prove to-morrow.

What though the heedless crowd around
 May greet us with their laughter?
 It proves that they have never found
 What we are seeking after :
 The lofty joy, the pure delight,
 That lights the path of duty,—
 That makes the earth about us bright,
 And life a thing of beauty.
 Then up ! and banish sloth away,
 At work-bench or in furrow ;
 Let others laugh at us to-day—
 We 'll laugh at them to-morrow.

This lesson Nature still instils,
 As well as Revelation :
 That every thing created fills
 Some chasm in creation ;
 There 's not a grass-blade in the vale,
 Or flower that looks to heaven,
 To which, could we but read the tale,
 Some use has not been given.
 Then up ! let us of nobler clay,
 From these a lesson borrow ;
 For sloth and idleness to-day
 Will bring regret to-morrow.

The meanest worm that crawls the dust,
 Before its life is ended,
 Accomplishes the purpose just
 For which it was intended ;
 Think ye that man alone hath been
 Placed in the world to mar it ?

Shall we live, and our fellow-men
Be none the better for it ?
No ! let us lend a feeble ray
To light the gloom of sorrow ;
For we, who proffer aid to-day,
May need the same to-morrow.

Though weak and frail, we each can make
The world a little brighter ;
With every cheering word we speak,
Somebody's heart is lighter ;
And should misfortune be our share,
With grief and pain attended,
Each pang with patience let us bear—
We know 't will soon be ended !
Though rough and thorny be our way,
And paved with pain and sorrow—
Though we may sow in tears to-day,
We 'll reap in joy to-morrow !

THE PLOWBOY.

HALF-BURIED in the morning mists
The meadows silent lie,
The sun is slowly climbing up
The ruddy eastern sky,
As, light of heart, the farmer boy
Begins his daily toil,
To guide the team and hold the plow
And turn the mellow soil.

Keep every furrow trim and straight,
With practised eye and hand ;
And when the whole is overturned,
"Strike out" another "land."
Search where you may, the world contains
No nobler field of labor ;
More proud than that of him who wields
The flashing spear or sabre.

What though the hand be rough that holds
The handle of the plow ?
What though the summer sun hath poured
Its fierceness on your brow ?
What though your pantaloons may boast
A patch on either knee ?

These are but badges that proclaim
Nature's nobility.

What though the brainless fop may sneer
In supercilious pride ?
What though the child of luxury
Pass by the other side ?
What though no gilt-edged note invites
To strut where fashion reigns
O'er thronging crowds of thoughtless fools
With softer hands and brains ?

The school-boy reads the ancient tale :
How foreign foes unfurled
Their flag before the walls of Rome,
Proud mistress of the world ;
Then rallied they whose lives had passed
Where clashing squadrons wheeled,
And chose for leader one whose home
Was the un-tented field.

When patriot sires of freedom fought
Against the tyrant foemen,
Our country found her best defence
Her brave and sturdy yeomen ;
When traitors from within assailed
Our flag by land and sea,
Theirs were the stalwart hands that kept
Our country one and free.

But on a bloodless battle-field
Are made your conquests now ;

Your foes are falling, rank by rank,
Before the conquering plow ;
The plow, more potent than the sword,
The bayonet, or the ball—
Whose victims, friendless and unwept,
Are buried where they fall.

Not yours the widow's wail of woe,
The starving orphan's tear,
The dying groan of agony
With none to pity near ;
But by the labor of your hands
The hungry shall be fed,
And life and plenty crown the earth,
Now drear, and dark, and dead.

Then on ! work on ! forgetting not
A world in waiting stands ;
The field of human progress calls
For fearless hearts and hands.
With patient faith, with earnest zeal,
The laborer there must toil ;
And many a furrow, broad and deep,
Must overturn the soil.

Then shall we see the giant weeds
Of Error overthrown,
And in their native soil, the seeds
Of Truth and Beauty sown.
Now, on our vision from afar
The golden harvest gleams—
More bounteous than our wishes are,
More glorious than our dreams.

THE CHILD'S PRAYER.

" Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep ;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

THROUGH all the gathering mists of age
One scene and season lingers yet—
The first enstamped on memory's page,
The last I ever can forget ;
'T was when the orb of day declined
Beneath the golden-tinted west,
I sought my mother's knee to find
Upon her bosom perfect rest ;
And when the stars began to shine
From out the ether blue and deep,
I said the prayer whose opening line
Was " Now I lay me down to sleep."

O childhood hours—how calm, how bright—
How like a dream they passed away !
That mother sank to sleep one night,
And woke in everlasting day !
Then manhood, with its perils, came—
Its high-wrought hopes, its vague desires ;
Ambition's fervid, quenchless flame,
And passion's baleful furnace-fires ;

But oft the thought had power to sway,
Amid temptations fierce and deep—
If thus I sin, how can I say,
“I pray the Lord my soul to keep”?

Around us flit, on viewless wing,
The silent messengers of death ;
Where health is now, an hour may bring
The burning brow and fevered breath ;
Alas ! how many sparkling eyes
That close to-night on scenes of mirth,
Before another sun shall rise
Shall look their last on scenes of earth !
Ere morning dawns again for me,
The silver cord of life may break ;
O Father, take me home to Thee,
“If I should die before I wake”!

Our clay shall mingle with the dust,
And o'er it grow the grassy sod—
Yet something lives, to dwell, we trust,
Safe in the bosom of its God.
Amid the gathering gloom of night
We near the river deep and wide,
But friends we love, with forms of light,
Are waiting on the other side :
When life's low tide is ebbing fast,
And sense and thought their throne forsake,
Then be my earliest prayer my last—
“I pray the Lord my soul to take.”

MUSINGS IN SPRING.

OH, how rich with rarest beauty
Is this sunny world of ours,
When the virgin Spring comes blushing,
Like a bride, arrayed in flowers ;
When the wanton warblers waken
Merry melody that seems
Like the gentle, joyous music
Wafted from the land of dreams !

Welcome, Spring ! again thou bringest
Flowers fair and odors sweet,
While the woodland birds are singing
Thy return with joy to greet ;
All the beauty that lay buried—
Bound by winter's icy chain,—
All the joys we feared had perished,
Thou hast brought to life again.

No, not all ! my restless spirit
From thy presence sadly turns,
And for one thou canst not bring me
With a weary longing yearns ;
Oh, my heart—my heart is buried
Where the weeping willows wave ;
Spring, thy fairest flowers are growing
Green upon my mother's grave.

At thy presence beauty smileth
Bright from every flower and tree—
But 't is not the smile of kindness
That my mother had for me !
Thou hast taught the merry songsters
At thy coming to rejoice—
But ye bring me not the music
Of my mother's gentle voice !

Winter had the earth enshrouded
With a snowy winding-sheet,
When the angels came to bear her
To her home with noiseless feet :
Then the sun went out in heaven,
While my heart grew faint and chill,
And though all about be brightness,
Winter rests upon it still !

Midnight darkness gathered o'er me
As we looked that last good-night—
I to roam this world of sorrow,
She to tread the halls of light ;
And 't is only when in slumber,
Freed, my spirit soars above,
That she walks again beside me
With her olden smile of love.

And in dreamy mood I often
Roam amid the forest wild,
Heedless of the world around me,
In her arms again, a child :

Or beside the placid river
Wander when the day is o'er,
Listening as the mimic billows
Wash against the pebbly shore :

And I wonder when the angel,
Death, shall come to bear me on
O'er the dark and silent river
To the land where she is gone !
For the fragrance of its flowers
Morning zephyrs oft times bring,
And I almost catch the music
From that land of endless spring.

MY FRIEND AND HIS FRIEND.

BE it known, to begin with, that I have a friend ;
And the greatest of blessings that fortune can send,
And almost the rarest, I apprehend,
Is one upon whom you can fully depend,
Whose taste and feelings with yours can blend,
Who your varying moods can comprehend,
To your sorrows an ear sympathetic will lend,
(And a dollar or two till your finances mend):
Of course, by this preface I do not intend
For a moment to be understood to pretend
That my friend is precisely perfection ;
For all his ideas I can not defend,
As the reader will find who will condescend
With patience and care to scan to the end
The remarks and comments which I shall append
For his candid and thoughtful reflection.

My friend, like many most excellent men,
Had a favorite hobby—which, now and then,
He zealously urged with tongue or pen ;
This hobby was “ Education ” ;
And one more worthy no man ever strode,
Or more firmly and bravely and gallantly rode,
As his numberless speeches and essays showed .

That with genius and fervor and earnestness glowed,
With thought and humor and wit overflowed,
And pertinent apt illustration.

My friend some time ago said to me :
“ I have a friend whom I want you to see—
A lady,—and when you have seen her,” said he,
“ I think that you will at once agree,
With all her acquaintances, that she
Is a talented, wonderful woman ;
Nor is it strange that she is admired,
And her presence in every circle desired ;
For the education that she has acquired
Is really something uncommon.

“ In ancient history she is at home
With the contents of many a ponderous tome—
The record of Babylon, Greece and Rome,
Of Egypt and Palestine’s grandeur and gloom,
And the Saracens’ growth and glory ;
And coming down to a later time,
There is not a country in any clime,
Destroyed, dismembered, or still in its prime,
But she can repeat its story.

“ And as for biography—there again,
With memory perfect, and faultless ken,
She will give you the names, and tell where and when
Have flourished the world’s most eminent men,
Whom writers have lavished their ink on—
Whether emperor, statesman, or conqueror,

Whether famous in law, or religion, or war
For deeds we admire, or crimes we abhor,
From Cain, and Nimrod, and Moses, and Thor,
To Washington, Franklin, and Lincoln.

“And equally well informed is she,
Or better, if such a thing could be,
In the boundless domain of science :
In botany, chemistry, and physiology,
Paleontology and geology,
Optics, astronomy, meteorology,
Ornithology, ichthyology,
Anthropology, and zoology,
(Not omitting even theology,)—
In short, in every branch of knowledge, I
Bid her critics defiance.

“In every department of literature,
She has read all the books that she could procure—
And their number is legion ; with memory sure
She will quote from authors the most obscure,
And never once credit the wrong fellow ;
You can name no novelist, poet, or sage,
Of any country, or any age,
But she will repeat to you page after page,
From Homer or Horace to Longfellow.

“And her own writings you must have seen
In many a paper and magazine,
For she wields a pen that is facile and keen ;
She is fluent in conversation—

In fact, she stands at the head of a club,
Modelled after the pattern of one at the 'Hub'
(That 's Boston), and once she has spoken in public—a lengthy and able oration.

“ She reads and composes in Latin and Greek ;
Italian and German and French she can speak ;
Is an artist in drawing and painting ;
And as for music, I 'll only say,
With a harp, or guitar, or piano, the way
In which this lady can sing and play
Is positively enchanting.

“ And sometime, whenever the chance may occur,
As you are somewhat a philosopher,
I am going to introduce you to her,
For your critical observation ;
And then, I acknowledge, 't is part of my plan
To afford you the chance, and induce you to scan
Her mental abilities close as you can,
And tell me of any one, woman or man,
With a better education.”

My friend, having thus explained his design,
Invited me to his house to dine ;
And I, upon going thither,
Met her, whose acquirements many and great
My friend so delighted to contemplate ;
I talked with her long, and listened late,
And came, in the course of time and fate,
To a thorough acquaintance with her.

And certain inferences I drew,
And certain convictions upon me grew,
Till many a test had proved them true,
And what first I suspected, at last I knew—

But meanwhile not a word said I
About her, until long afterward, when
My friend and myself were conversing again
Of education, and women, and men,
And he asked me what my conclusions had been
Respecting his friend, the lady.

I told my friend that it would be vain
For me to attempt to express and explain
To him what opinion I did entertain
Of her, in a single sentence ;
But I could illustrate in part, as it were,
The idea which I had obtained of her,
By a parallel case which chanced to recur
To my mind just then, to which I would refer—

A lady of my acquaintance.

“Your lady,” I said, “one truly will find
A cyclopædia of every kind
Of facts to serve as food for the mind—
And praise for it no one denies her ;
My lady a similar course has pursued,
Not with mental, but literal, physical food,
And has gained the name, you may well conclude,
Of being a great gormandizer.

“In the course of her life she has managed to eat
Not only all common descriptions of meat,

And bread made of rye, corn, barley, and wheat,
 And Irish and sweet potatoes,
And turnips, and cabbage, and onions, and beans,
And melons and strawberries, lettuce and greens,
And apples, plums, peaches, and nectarines,
 And pieplant, and peas, and tomatoes,

“But a list beyond naming of strange food beside ;
Such viands as most of us never have tried,
By every country and climate supplied ;
In short, she will tell you herself, with pride,
 She has eaten of every thing edible ;
That the total amount that has gone down her throat,
Of provisions, would laden a goodly-sized boat,
While the liquids she drank might have kept it afloat,
 Are facts, although almost incredible.”

My friend sat silent a moment or two,
As if not certain that I were through ;
Then said, my story was doubtless true—
He supposed I was talking of what I knew,
And with some pertinent purpose in view,—
But really, what it had to do
 With the subject of education,
Although some subtle connection might be,
He was as yet unable to see,
And therefore would venture to ask of me
 To explain my explanation.

To which I answered, that, In my view,
What a person had eaten, or where it grew,
If plant or animal, old or new,

Or whether it walked, or swam, or flew,
Or sang, or bellowed, or grunted, or 'crew,'
Whether humming-bird soup, or crocodile stew,
Or moss from Iceland, or bark from Peru,
Or dates from Turkey or Timbuctoo,
Or came by steamer, or raft, or canoe,
Or was eaten from dishes white, yellow, or blue,
From a table with one leaf, or with two,—
All this has fully as much to do

With the subject of education
As the food upon which her mind has fed,
The number and kind of books she has read,
The phalanx of facts she has stored in her head,
Or a knowledge of languages, living or dead,
Or of science and arts—no matter," I said,

"How vast were the aggregation.

"How many things one may have eaten, or what,
Or the country or climate from which they were brought,
Or the person by whom they were gathered or bought—
All these are but facts incidental, and not

At all the primary question ;
But this is the matter at stake, I conclude,
And the point of essential importance—what good
Has been gained by the one who has eaten the food ?
How much have the system and strength been renewed,
The result of its thorough digestion ?

"And more than likely the chief among
Your gourmands, for all that goes over his tongue,
May have weak muscles, and nerves unstrung,

And with dyspeptic pangs be stung,
And keen rheumatic tortures wrung ;

And the glutton-in-chief of your city,
With fever may burn, or with ague may shake,
From dreams of horror untold may wake,
To feel in each fibre a separate ache,
May be an incurable physical wreck,
An object of loathing and pity.

“ I go still further, and say that the fact
That one could be guilty of such an act
As keeping the stomach continually packed,
One may say, to its utmost repletion,
Without any interval left for repose—
This course of itself sufficiently shows
How little the person pursuing it knows
Of the methods by which the system grows,
And the laws of health and nutrition.

“ And many a person with narrower range
Of choice, with limited chance for change,
Or for eating aught that is rare and strange,
Or with appetite not so eager,
Has found himself finally none the worse
That his daily food has been common and coarse,
But has managed to make it a constant source
Of health, and enjoyment, and physical force,
And constitutional vigor.

“ And so of the mind : I deem it plain
That any one who would attempt to maintain

That all the knowledge a person could gain
 By lifelong, constant cramming of brain,
 Is 'culture,' or even the way to attain
 To mental cultivation,
 By the very fact that he could propose
 So monstrous a misconception, shows
 That as yet, with all his knowledge, he knows
 Not even what *is* education.

"And many a case like this we have seen—
 Where mental, not bodily food has been
 Persistently poured and crowded in,
 And great parade, and incessant din
 Made over the 'mental discipline':
 And yet we have seen it follow,
 That these same minds have proved, after all,
 Undisciplined, feeble, distressingly small,
 Distorted by prejudice, jaundiced by gall,
 By passion or appetite held in thrall,
 Impractical, narrow, and shallow.

"While others we see who know little of schools,
 And less of science and classical rules,
 And yet who are far from being fools,
 By whatever test we apply to,—
 Not constantly gathering facts, and then
 With fluent tongue or with facile pen
 As constantly pouring them out again;
 But persons of judgment and practical ken,
 Strong, calm, clear-headed, broad-minded men,
 Whom it always is safe to 'tie to.'

“To grasp, and gather, and even to hold,
To garner the thoughts of thinkers of old,
To accept what modern scholars unfold,
To be able to tell what one has been told,

Is not the main object of study :
The mind, I deem, should be something more
Than a gaping pool into which we may pour
Prodigious amounts of classical lore,
And facts of science a measureless store,
And now and then count and con them o’er,
Our neighbors and friends to astonish or bore,
To draw from the pool, as we stand on the shore,
Deep draughts of what has been poured in before—
Excepting a little more muddy.

“The mind, I deem, should be, rather, a spring,
A sparkling and fresh and perennial thing,

With fountains that evermore well up,—
Almost, it would seem to, be trying to teach,
By a beautiful emblem, more striking than speech,
The glorious lesson to all and to each,
That to *fill up* is not to *develop*.”

When I had concluded, I saw that my friend
Absorbed and silent and thoughtful remained,
And I surmised that what I had explained

He was mentally conning and weighing.
But finally breaking the silence, said he :
“Although your ideas are novel to me,
I think I can truthfully say that I see
The force of what you have been saying.

"I see " continued my friend, " furthermore,
That the lady of whom I have spoken before,
You do not regard—notwithstanding her store
Of scientific and classical lore—

A woman of education ;

And I really would like to have you declare,
Whether ever you knew, and if so when and where,
A person whose mental attainments would square
With your lofty ideal, and fitly could bear

That title of exaltation."

To which I answered : " I think I may
With perfect truth and sincerity say
I know of a woman in every way

Most worthy to wear that title ;

But let me warn you now, in advance,
Between the two is a difference,
In style, as in fact, that is truly immense,
Fundamental, and thorough, and vital.

" For, with the lady to whom I refer,
Schoolmasters and books a rarity were,
And education was gained by her

With few of the 'modern appliances' ;
Her knowledge of history must be small ;
Of foreign languages none at all ;
Nor is she what a scholar would call
Profoundly versed in any of all

The numerous natural sciences.

" But somehow, sometime—just how or when
Is a mystery I will not try to explain—

In the course of her life she has managed to gain
A fund of information,
Precisely as useful, if not the same,
As that of many a man whose name
Is written high on the scroll of fame
With those whom scholars are wont to claim
As men of education.

“Her mind is free, well-balanced, and bold ;
Not deeming that *all* of truth has been told
By thinkers and sages and prophets of old,
Of any religion or nation ;
Nor deeming it sure that a modern view,
Because it is radical, striking, and new,
Must therefore be necessarily true,
And worthy of acceptance.

“Your friend, if rightly I understand
Her nature, is like a piece of land
Entirely untouched by culturing hand—
Each atom of clay, loam, gravel, or sand
In its own primeval location ;
But she has gathered, with wonderful toil,
From far-away countries, the costliest spoil,
Fruit, flowers, and grains, wine, honey, and oil—
A profusion of products—and poured on the soil,
And calls the result, ‘cultivation.’

“While my friend’s mind I might better compare
To a pleasant garden, fertile and fair,
Enriched by patient culture and care,
Till any thing needed the soil will bear ;

'T is true that no brilliant exotics are there,
 The flowers and fruits are not costly nor rare ;
 Yet they show such taste in selection,
 Are arranged in such order, and trained to such grace,
 No change could be thought of, except to misplace ;
 The omission of aught would mar and deface,
 And any thing more, as any thing less,
 Would only destroy its perfection.

“ That such development should be gained,
 That such an altitude should be attained,
 Without the helps by custom ordained,
 Is something not easy to be explained,
 And surpasses our comprehension ;
 But when it is plain to you and to me
 She *is* developed harmoniously,
 Shall we declare that it cannot be,
 Because the means are a mystery,
 And the scaffolding we cannot see
 Whereby she has made her ascension ?

“ Undoubtedly often she must have thought
 What enjoyment would music and pictures have brought,
 And lectures and books, with the lessons they taught,
 If helps to culture like these to her lot
 Had fallen in larger measure ;
 But since this had *not* been—no matter how,—
 And since this, alas ! never could be now,
 She bravely pressed onward, and would not allow
 Nor losses nor lacks to becloud her brow,
 Or hinder her progress or pleasure.

"The lady is married, I may as well add ;
I beheld her a bride, gay, blooming, and glad,
And partly can guess of the hopes she had,
And her longing, deep, earnest, and almost sad,
For kindly appreciation :

That her husband was kind I have always believed ;
Yet could not help seeing, and deeply have grieved,
That *all* of her merits he never perceived,
But the greater the excellence she has achieved,
The less he has known of the life she lived—
A life of almost isolation.

"And she has never, by word or act,
Revealed to the gossiping world the fact
That her heart and life in aught had lacked,
But with smiling face and delicate tact
Fulfilled the demands, manifold and exact,
Of wifely and motherly duty ;
She has won the peace that wealth cannot buy ;
She has found the fountains that never dry ;
She lives a life that is pure and high,
Pervaded with heavenly beauty."

My friend for a season seemed to be
Absorbed and pondering seriously ;
Then said that, while his friendship for me
Was a thing that he would not presume on,
He would faithfully promise to be most discreet,
If I would afford him a chance to meet
And make the acquaintance of so sweet,
And able, and noble a woman.

"I think," I replied, "the event will show—
In fact, I may safely say, I *know*—
You have met with the lady, long ago,
And made her partial acquaintance, although
I fear that you may have been somewhat slow
To appreciate all the traits that go
To make her in no respect below

 The paragon you have been seeking :
But know her better ; 't will brighten your life—
And *hers*—for, my friend, it is *your own wife*
 Of whom I have just been speaking !"

A YEAR AGO.

A YEAR ago what dreams I wove
Of joys the coming year should know !
How brightly shone the stars above ;
How fair the soft, untrampled snow !
But brighter than the stars above,
And fairer than the stainless snow,
The gentle maiden of my love,
My promised bride a year ago !

But faded are those visions bright—
Buried with her that loved me so !
The wintry winds, this stormy night,
Pile on her grave the cold, white snow ;
But darker than the starless night,
And colder than the drifted snow,
This heart that swelled with such delight
Of love and hope, a year ago !

MY MAPLE.

A MAPLE sapling, tall and fair,
Amid a shady forest grew ;
Slow-trembling in the summer air
Its leaflets drank the morning dew.

But some one chose it for his spoil,
Because it was so straight and grand ;
Upwrenched it from its mother-soil,
And bore it thence with heedless hand.

The cruel axeman rudely cleft
Its glorious emerald diadem,
Till not a bough nor leaf was left
Upon the bare, unsightly stem.

"T will be transplanted," some one said.
My faithless heart replied : "In vain ;
Uprooted, mutilated, dead,
It ne'er can be a tree again."

Here in the park they planted it,
Where verdured walks our steps invite ;
Beneath its spreading shade I sit,
While thus its history I write.

It lived ; nay, more : where wounded worst,
By some strange chance, I know not how,
The buds grew freshest there, and first,
And every bud became a bough.

And thus my maple, at the last,
In green and grand luxuriance throve,
With foliage that by far surpassed
Its comrades in their native grove.

So I have known a human soul,
O'erwhelmed and wrecked in storm and strife,
Prevented of its chosen goal,
And robbed of all that seemed its life.

But patience made the lesson plain ;
And brought the spirit tempest-tossed
A wondrous joy, a boundless gain,
For all it suffered, all it lost !

Then let not sorrow reign supreme
When cherished hopes are dashed away ;
Despair not over what may seem
Defeat and cureless loss to-day ;

But look, with trust and gratitude,
Although it be through blinding tears,
To Him whose perfect plans include
The cycles of eternal years !

TO MY WIFE IN HER ABSENCE.

LIGHT of my Life ! the world is reposing,
Calm as a babe on the bosom of Night ;
Withdrawn are the curtains of glory, unclosing
The windows of Heaven, out-flashing their light ;
A thousand fond thoughts to thee hourly are winging,
As pure as the angel-forms watching above you ;
The song that you taught to my heart, it is singing—
The song whose sweet burden is ever, “ I love you ! ”

Joy of my Heart ! Night's noon finds me waking—
Half-blissful, half-sad, I am musing alone ;
Unsatisfied arms that to clasp thee are aching,
Are folded at last to no heart but my own :
Then in dreams I forget that a summery sky,
Far distant, and fairer, is bending above you ;
In dreams I am thrilled by the tender reply
Of musical lips as they murmur, “ I love you ! ”

Bride of my Youth ! my spirit is yearning,
And counting the hours till the absent shall come ;
Our desolate hearthstone awaits thy returning,
For only thy presence can make it a home :
Thrice blessed that home by affection made dear,
Thrice brilliant the heaven that arches above you ;
Thrice happy the day when my darling is near,
That in each of its hours I may whisper, “ I love you ! ”

USEFULNESS BETTER THAN FAME.

I HAVE been unduly ambitious,
With hopes it is hard to forget ;
Such day-dreams are far too delicious
To vanish and leave no regret.

Hopes like the mirage in the distance,
To win the bright chaplet of fame,
And, dying, to leave in existence
A worthy and world-honored name.

Dreams only ! their death-knell is ringing !
Proud heart, to thy destiny come !
Thou fain wouldst be soaring and singing—
Sink down and forever be dumb !

To fetter the soul with a burden
Of longings it never can tell,
And grant it no loftier guerdon
Than failure—O God, is it well ?

'T is well ! for such lessons compel us
A loftier standard to raise ;
He can but be selfish and jealous
Who lives on the incense of praise.

Such lessons the stars might have taught us
As round us their glamor they fling ;
Such lessons the flow'rets have brought us
On every sweet zephyr of spring.

In forest and glen far and lonely
The flowers refuse not to bloom ;
Though heedlessly trampled, they only
Yield sweeter and richer perfume.

The stars that we walk under nightly
Win from us no accents of praise,
Yet beam on us none the less brightly,
Nor dream of withholding their rays.

So shine, noble soul—ever giving
No heed to neglect or to strife—
Content with the glory of living
A useful and beautiful life.

WAITING FOR THE MORNING.

RACKED with unremitting anguish,
Through the long and silent night,
Burning, parched, and faint, I languish,
Waiting for the morning light :
On my couch impatient lying,
Though my fevered lips are dumb,
Still my heart is sadly crying,
“ Will the morning never come ? ”

So impatient ? one night only ?
There are those who ne'er complain
Though their lives be one long, lonely
Night of ever-present pain ;
Hearts that break and give no token ;
Hearts that hunger for the tomb ;
With their sad lament unspoken—
“ Will the morning never come ? ”

So, when trampled Justice wages
War against Oppression's sway ;
Through the dreary, darkling ages
Waiting for the promised day—
Wonder not they ask, when baffled,
Hurried to a felon's doom
In the prison or on the scaffold,
“ Will the morning never come ? ”

Patient watcher ! see Aurora's
Crimson banners all unfurled !
See a thousand rainbow glories
Flash athwart the wakening world !
Dawning twilight, pale and tender,
Dissipates the night of gloom,
And the swift-increasing splendor
Tells that morn at last has come !

Fainting spirit ! bear thy burden !
Do thy duty, fearlessly ;
Time will surely bring thy guerdon,
Right will triumph by and by ;
Then a thousand lips shall bless thee,
Though thine own for aye be dumb ;
Let no palsying fear possess thee,
For the morn will surely come !

VOICES OF THE SOUL.

SADLY have I wandered [Voice of Doubt.]
From abiding faith ;
Deeply have I pondered
Over life and death,
And wondered if our being ended with our breath.

Sought the spirit-essencē ;
Sought to surely prove
One all-conscious Presence
Throned in light above
Who rules the universe in wise and boundless love.

Read the revelation [Voice of Faith.]
Given in ages gone ;
Cease from speculation—
Since enough is known
To show that God exists, and careth for His own.

Wherefore question longer ?
Doubts are thrice accursed,
And but grow the stronger
Every moment nursed :
Accept the known, and say: "Soul, be no more athirst !"

While no star is present [Voice of Doubt.
 To illumine the night,
 Oh, it must be pleasant,
 And it may be right,
 To dwell in rayless gloom, yet feel no lack of light !

Blest are they who sweetly
 Live and sweetly die—
 Satisfied completely,
 Never asking "why?"
 But oh, my soul demands "More light!" with ceaseless
 cry.

But canst thou come nearer [Voice of Faith.
 To the source of light,
 Or canst thou see clearer
 Through the starless night,
 Than ancient seers and prophets with anointed sight ?

Learn what all the sages
 Of maturest thought
 Through the hoary ages
 Have received and taught :
 What canst thou discover more than they have brought ?

Will it cause a glory [Voice of Doubt.
 O'er *my* life to flow,
 That there is a story,
 Born of long ago,
 Some ancient saw a light along *his* pathway glow ?

Though with anguish keenest
I in darkness plod—
Though I be the meanest
Thing that crawls the sod—
No other worm shall come between me and my God !

If there be a Being [Voice of Prayer.]
In the dim unknown,
All things earthly seeing
From His viewless throne,
And loving all mankind as children of His own—

If this gross, material
World but underlies
One unseen, ethereal,
Whereunto we rise,
Which by and by our finer sense shall realize—

If a spark immortal
Lingers in our clay,
Death the darksome portal
To an endless day,
With chance beyond for man to climb some starry
way—

If the voiceless anguish,
Grief and toil severe,
Of the crowds that languish
Through existence here,
Shall find their compensation in some other sphere—

If the whole we see not
 In what now appears ;
 If existence be not
 Few and fleeting years
 Of hope, and grief, and pain, and sin, and death, and tears :

Some revealing token,
 Father, grant to me,
 Lest my heart be broken
 As I hear and see
 The thing I am, the Nothing that I soon must be !

Then a sudden splendor [The answer.]
 Dawned upon my sight,
 Soft, serene, and tender—
 Seemingly the slight
 Auroral glow that harbingers the morning light.

Though no voice of thunder
 Cleft the pulseless air,
 Though no scene of wonder
 Burst upon me there,
 The light was of itself an answer to my prayer.

Like the balm of healing
 On my spirit fell
 That divine revealing,
 Which sufficed to tell
 This lesson, that the world should learn and ponder
 well :

Though Despair and Terror
Stand like sentries grim,
Though the greatest error
May our vision dim,
In some way God will find the soul that seeks for
Him.

Though my vague suggestions [Doubts receding.
Were not fully met,
Nor my doubts and questions
Clearly answered yet,
They to my vision seemed in new relations set ;

Driven to a distance,
And their clamor stilled
By the mere existence
Of the light that filled
My glad responsive soul, and all my being thrilled.

All the vast and formless
Phantoms of affright,
Seemed but fleeting, harmless
Shadows of the night,
That vanish at the presence of the morning light.

Toward the bright horizon [The new Eden.
Widening far and fair,
Fell my tranced eyes on
Beauty everywhere—
A world serene as Eden lay before me there.

Not that fields elysian,
Or celestial forms,
Burst upon my vision,
Bore me in their arms—
But old, familiar scenes wore new and wondrous
charms.

Meadow, vale, and mountain,
Sky, and sea, and shore,
River, rill, and fountain,
Commonplace before,
A new significance and relevancy bore ;

Every shrub revealing
Some deific law,
Till I felt like kneeling
With a sense of awe,
As though it were the burning bush the prophet saw.

And I now detected [The uncreated light.]
That the light was one
Not of earth, reflected
From some far-off sun—
Not like a sheen sent back by something shone upon—

But a flame transcendent,
Trembling into view,
Like a self-resplendent
Radiance gleaming through
The landscape, partly veiling it ;—and then I knew

That it told a story
Words could never give
Of a central glory
So superlative
That on its blaze no mortal eye could look and live !

This effulgence tender,
Flooding sea and land
With its mellow splendor,
Now I understand
Better than when it dawned upon me, dimly grand.

Then I thought the glory
That so charmed my eye
Was the faint aurora
In the morning sky,
That told me night was passing, day was nigh.

Now do I discover
That the darkness dense
Only brooded over
My own blinded sense,
Now first receptive of that radiance intense.

Now I see that never
Was there any night ;
Ever and forever
Thus divinely bright
The universe has dwelt in uncreated light !

In that revelation [The unity of the universe.

Everywhere I see,
Running through creation,
Subtle harmony—

One master thought, one mystic band of unity:

In the shining, starry
Spheres that gleam on high,
In the darksome quarry
Where the cold rocks lie,
Embodying forms of life in ages long gone by ;

In the sunlight sleeping
On the flowery vale ;
In the shadows creeping
Over hill and dale ;
In summer calm, or autumn breeze, or winter gale ;

In the mists that linger
On the meadows broad ·
In the wingéd singer
And the senseless clod,
I see a wondrous one-ness—and that one is *God!*

One all-glorious Being,
Fount of life and force,
To our human seeing
Bearing forms diverse—
The Alpha and Omega of the Universe !

Creature and Creator
I behold the same—
What we know as "Nature"
Being but the frame,
The gross, material vesture of the Great I AM !

Nothing in creation,
To its farthest rim,
Mean or high in station,
Worm or seraphim—
No matter, force, or life—that is not part of Him !

Every grain of matter [Matter and force eternal.]
Must disintegrate,
And its atoms scatter
Into space, to mate
With other atoms, in some other shape or state ;

Pass through transformations
Science cannot trace ;
Form new combinations ;
Vanish into space :
But naught can its existence utterly efface.

Science undisputed
Teaches us that Force,
Though it be transmuted,
Turned in different course,
Until it bears no seeming kinship to its source—

Flashing as attraction
 Through the boundless void—
 Resting in inaction
 Ages unemployed—
 Yet not a grain of force can ever be destroyed.

There are treasures that are [Superiority of spirit.]
 Worthier, I hold,
 Than insensate matter,
 In whatever mould—
 Than gems, or pearls, or precious stones, or purest gold :

There are stronger forces
 Than the power that rolls
 Planets in their courses
 And their flight controls,
 And speeds the blazing comets to their far-off goals :

These are dead ! think of it—
 What the world would be,
 With no heart to love it,
 With no eye to see,
 No living sense to realize its entity !

Think how vast the added
 Wealth of Nature's dower,
 Since she bears embodied
 All the grace and power
 Of Life, the glory-blossom of creation's flower !

Look on life, rejoicing
In the flocks and herds,
Or its presence voicing
In the song of birds,
Or in the sweeter melody of human words ;

In the keen, high joyance
Of the heart and brain,
When the powers of science
New control obtain,
Till man shall make infinitude his own domain ;

In the tender human
Ties that sweeten toil ;
In the love of woman,
In the infant's smile,
In all the fond affections that our life beguile ;

In the love of beauty,
And in fancies bright ;
In the sense of duty
That can find delight
In sacrifice and death for love of Truth and Right ;

In the flush and fever
Of divine desire,
Sateless, seeking ever
Something more and higher,—
These fair phenomena bespeak the hidden fire—

Life, or soul, or spirit—
 All in fact the same,
 Whosoever share it,
 Or whatever name
 The earthen vessels bear that hold the heavenly flame.

Let your vision wander (Shall matter outlast spirit)
 Wheresoe'er it please,
 Through the star-depths yonder
 Of ethereal seas,
 It meets with Matter, Force, and Life—and only these.

Shall the most exalted
 Of the triune list,
 At the threshold halted,
 Cease to co-exist—
 More evanescent than a molecule of mist ?

“ Force ” could feel no sorrow
 Though its end were near ;
 “ Matter ” cannot borrow
 Grief, nor faith, nor fear :
 Shall that alone which hungers for a high career,

Baseless longings cherish ?
 Be the only thing
 With the power to perish ?
 To existence cling,
 Only to wither in its early blossoming ?

Are we evanescent
 Sparks of consciousness,
 That with sad, incessant
 Moanings of distress,
 Chase one another down the gulf of Nothingness ?

In that light supernal, [Spirit is eternal.]
 Golden letters shine :
 "All things are eternal,
 As they are divine" ;
 Forever lives the Universal Soul—and mine.

For the Spirit-ocean
 Wherein all things dwell,
 As in ceaseless motion
 Its bright billows swell,
 Must have its spirit-atoms, indestructible—

Sometimes emanating
 As a flower or tree,
 Sometimes incarnating
 As humanity—
 One glimmering, sentient spark assuming form in me !

(If that sea of spirit
 Fills the "infinite,"
 What unreason were it
 For us to admit
 That this, *my* spirit, can exist outside of it !)

Not a vague tradition,
Not a hopeful guess,
But a recognition
Based on consciousness,
Now tells me—not that I “inherit” or “possess,”—

But I *am* an atom
Of divinity ;
Am the ultimatum
That can never be
Destroyed, divided, quenched, throughout eternity.

As the olden story [All things are holy.
Tells that Moses found
Suddenly a glory
Shining all around,
And by the token knew he stood on holy ground,

Now to me seems holy
Every thing I see ;
Naught so weak and lowly
But in some degree
The hand of God has consecrated it for me.

Rock, and tree, and flower
Silently proclaim
Boundless skill and power ;
Bear the monogram
Of the Great Artist's incommunicable Name !

Bird to bird replying ;
Lowling of the kine ;
Breeze of autumn sighing
Softly through the pine,
Are myriad variations of the Voice Divine.

I have suffered losses ;
Languished from disease ;
Bowed 'neath crushing crosses ;
Missed of wealth and ease :
But after all I do not care so much for these.

[Triumph-song
of the defeated.

I could bear it better ;
I could be content :
But the life-long fetter
On development
Through poverty and toil—*that* mainly I lament.

'T is a poisoned arrow
In the heart to know
That one's world is narrow,
And one's work is low,
When with his neighbor's chances it need not be so.

But since I am certain
Of eternity,—
Since beyond death's curtain
In the by-and-bye,
There is a long to-morrow left for such as I,—

I can bear my burden
 For a little time ;
 I will ask no guerdon
 But a chance to climb,
 However slow and painfully, to heights sublime.

From the empyrean
 Hope has come to dwell ;
 Her unceasing pæan
 Seems my soul to tell,
 Whatever changing fortune waits me, " All is well ! "

Pain and grief may fill me ;
 Rough my way may seem ;
 Crime may wrong or kill me ;
 But it cannot dim
 God's light, nor that in me which radiates from Him !

Storms of wild disaster
 On my bark descend
 But to sweep me faster
 Toward my journey's end—
 There is no foe that can be other than a friend.

When to my fond bosom
 Loving ones I fold ;
 When in death I lose them,
 Pale, and still, and cold,
 There is a pleasure left I never knew of old.

Now no longer numbered
With the "lost" are they ;
Simply disencumbered
Of their mortal clay,
And passed beyond the twilight into perfect day.

I must wait a little
In this lower sphere ;
But ere long the brittle
Bonds that hold me here
Shall crumble into kindred dust and disappear.

Then shall I be able,
Borne on wings of fire,
Like the bird of fable
From its funeral pyre,
To reach the heights to which I vainly now aspire.

From my fleshly prison,
Disenthralled and free,
I, "not dead, but risen,"
Shall more fully see
The boundless grandeur of my birthright—*Immortality!*

THE VOICELESS.

I ALWAYS was a quiet child,
Who seldom spake, or wept, or smiled ;
My joys and sorrows, hopes and fears,
Were rarely breathed to others' ears ;
My playmates laughed in merry glee—
I sat in silent ecstasy ;
They sobbed their little griefs to sleep—
I waked, but not to moan or weep.
It was not that I deemed it best
My feelings should be unexpressed ;
But some strange spell, whose firm control
I could not lift from off my soul—
A viewless and unclanking chain,
Whose links I strove to rend, in vain.
Oh, sometimes, when I used to see
My sisters on my mother's knee,
Returning every soft caress
And tone of loving tenderness,
My heart sent forth its silent cry
For voice to speak one word, and die !
I could not answer : " I love you ! "
And yet—I think my mother knew.

'T is not so many years ago
As now it seems to me, I know,
Since one I trusted sought my side,
And would have won me for his bride ;
I had not language to express
The love I hoped that he would guess ;
He wore his country's colors then—
A hero 'mid heroic men ;
Too nobly delicate to stay,
Compelling words I could not say,
With sadness not to be concealed,
He sought the foremost battle-field ;
I asked his life with ceaseless quest—
But Heaven foresaw it was not best ;
'Mid plunging shot and shrieking shell,
Face to the foe, he bravely fell ;
His eye grew dim in death's eclipse,
My name the last upon his lips.
I heard, nor heaved one sob nor sigh ;
Now from his peaceful home on high,
That lofty soul can read full well
The love I had no tongue to tell.

My silence is not understood—
Not even by the wise and good ;
I miss some kindly sympathy
That might sustain and gladden me :
For friends imagine I have not
Religious feeling, earnest thought,
Because my voice I do not raise
In fervent prayer or rapturous praise.

I have not words—I wish I had—
To tell them that my heart is glad ;
Such joys are mine it would betray
Almost ingratitude to pray
For further blessings when so blest
With outward comforts, inward rest :
I shall not wander anywhere
Beyond my Father's reach and care ;
In countless ways He lets me see
His constant, boundless love for me ;
And even though I never raise
To Him a vocal song of praise,
I know His faith is never dim
That for His kindness I love Him.

I am not sad when I am still :
A thousand sweet emotions thrill
From Nature's pulsing heart to mine—
Which answers with no outward sign :
The soul responds, though lips are dumb,
To sweet suggestions that may come
From earth beneath or skies above ;
From billowy mead, and swaying grove ;
From song of birds, and hum of bees ;
From wintry blast, and summer breeze ;
From flowers that hide among the grass,
But yield their perfume as I pass ;
From streamlets rippling on their way ;
From rosy dawn, and twilight gray ;
From stars that on the brow of Night

Blaze down their everlasting light ;
And every fancy, hope, and thought,
With quick and keen emotion fraught,
Is welcomed—but in silence sleeps
Within the soul's unmeasured deeps,
Like lustrous gems in sunless caves
Beneath the unrevealing waves.

And there are moments when I hear,
Floating upon the spirit's ear—
Creating melody within
That quells the day's distracting din—
The gentle measures, faint and low,
The dreamy movement, soft and slow,
Of distant music borne to me
From some far land across the sea,
Awakening every spirit-sense
To moods unwonted and intense,
Enlarging memory, hope, and faith,
Beyond the earth, and time, and death.

I would not murmur nor repine,
Yet sometimes wish the gift were mine,
A voice that could give forth again,
For other ears, some humble strain
Of those high chords that sweep and roll
Across my rapt and listening soul.
But I can wait—for well I know
That in the land to which I go,
No human words, no artist's trick

Of language or of rhetoric,
Shall bear away the palm divine ;
But we, the Voiceless now, shall join,
In that high realm by seraphs trod,
The choir before the throne of God !

GOD STRENGTHEN ME !

O THOU Almighty One,
Look down on me
From Thine eternal throne,
And hear my plea :
Thou dost my weakness know ;
Thou canst Thy power bestow ;
Oh, strengthen me !

I wander in the dark,
Feebly, alone ;
E'en Hope's last glimmering spark
Almost is gone ;
I cannot even see
The way to come to Thee—
Come Thou to me !

When first I looked within
Myself, and saw
How grievous was my sin,
How just Thy law,
I sought myself to cure—
Myself to render pure
In sight of Thee.

Fondly I cherished long
My selfish pride ;
I thought that I was strong
Until I tried ;
Then, soon, alas ! I found
How firm the chain that bound
And tortured me.

I love but cannot live
A holy life ;
I look to Thee to give
Strength for the strife ;
Thou Helper of the weak,
Let me not vainly seek—
Oh, strengthen me !

LIVING STONES.

MY friend, are you growing discouraged
In fighting the battle of life?
Does it seem, in your weakness and darkness,
A hopelessly desperate strife?
Do you fear that your study and labor
Are destined to reap no reward?
Is the goal of your ardent ambition
By numberless obstacles barred?
Despair not! true, thorough self-culture
Is never unwisely bestowed:
The stone that is fit for the wall
Will not always be left in the road.

Does it seem an injustice that others,
Whose merits and fitness are less,
Through chances of fortune or favor,
Push forward to easy success?
Remember that fortune is fickle,
And friends will not always endure,
So to those who depend upon either
The future is never secure;
The tide that is now in their favor
At some time may ebb as it flowed,
And the stone that 's unfit for the wall
Will be ruthlessly flung in the road.

Be patient ! life's loftiest prizes
Are not to be hastily won ;
Expect not to gather your harvest
The moment the seed has been sown ;
A ravenous horde of pretenders,
A pushing and clamorous crew,
Will have to be tried and found wanting,
Ere you can be tried and found true ;
The best by the side of the worthless
Together may lie in the load ;
But the stone that is fit for the wall
Will not always be left in the road.

Go, read the encouraging story
Of eminent men of the past,
Who, long in obscurity toiling,
Compelled recognition at last ;
Of men who, in art, or in science,
Or letters, have conquered a place,
Or in the wide realm of invention
Have left a rich boon to their race :
Their names upon history's pages
Like stars in the darkness have glowed ;
Like stones that were fit for the wall,
They were not to be left in the road.

Undoubtedly there have been many
Who lived, and have passed from the earth,
And their fellows but ill comprehended
Their genuine greatness and worth ;

But the world whereunto we are hasting
Our loftiest powers will employ
And every iota of culture
Will brighten and heighten our joy ;
Doubt not we shall find, when we enter
That shining, celestial abode,
The rock that is fit for the Builder
Will never be left in the road !

SHE HAD NOTHIN' AGIN' HIM.

OF course you have heard of old Sojourner Truth,
The venerable negress, whose face is
As black as the ten-spot of spades—which, forsooth,
Is ten times as black as the ace is.

Of school education she has not a whit ;
She knows not the name of a letter :
But for keen common-sense, and for quick mother-wit,
No scholar on earth is her better.

Though fractions and syntax are out of her sphere,
And science beyond comprehension,
Her judgment is swift, and unerring, and clear,
In detecting all cant and pretension.

She could not by argument build or sustain
Any logical scheme of divinity,
Nor deems it worth while to bewilder her brain
About Jonah, or Job, or the Trinity.

But the Lord that she loves more than language can tell,
To her is no object of terror,
Alert to consign her to uttermost hell
For some theological error :

To her He seems not some august Mandarin,
In stone-hearted vigilance sitting,
Determined to damn her for some little sin
Of her own—or of Adam's—committing.

Despite what divinity doctors have penned,
She has always regarded Him rather
As being her infinite, intimate Friend,
Her loving, compassionate Father.

With trustful, and patient, and faith-anchored soul,
And heart sympathizing and tender,
She dwells full in sight of her heavenly goal,
And her life is illumed by its splendor.

It happened, one time, that to Sojourner's town
An evangelist made his arrival,
Determined to win himself local renown
By starting a glorious revival.

Not one of the large-hearted, noble-souled men
Who follow the Nazarene Teacher,
But shallow of feeling and narrow of brain,
A conceited and creed-crippled creature.

One evening some accident happened to bring
Him in contact with her—their first meeting ;—
The little, old, black, insignificant thing,
In silence observantly sitting.

“ Good woman,” he said, “ have you given a thought
To the glorious plan of salvation ?
Don't you think it is time that you earnestly sought
To escape from eternal damnation ?

“ Why not seek an interest now in the blood
Of your loving and crucified Saviour ?
Why not become reconciled now to your God,
And receive His forgiveness and favor ? ”

“ Why, sonny,” said Sojourner, “ I am *His child*,
And of course take an interest in Him ;
And I have n't *no reason* to be ‘ reconciled ’—
I never had nothin' agin' Him ! ”

ON SUCH A NIGHT AS THIS.

THE world is beautiful to-night,
 Enwrapt in radiance calm and rare ;
The heavens are bathed in mellow light,
 And songs and odors fill the air ;
Be others happy as they may,
 With gleeful mirth or tender bliss—
But oh ! I never can be gay
 On such a night as this !

The world was fair and bright to me
 Till told by trembling lips that I
A homeless orphan soon must be—
 My earliest, only friend must die !
So young in years, I little knew
 How much that mother I should miss,
Who passed the gates of glory through
 On such a night as this !

Mother and wife : O holy twain,
 Who shall decide which loveth best ?
What glory crowned my life again
 When to my heart my bride I pressed !
An angel walked with me awhile,
 Then gave me one last lingering kiss,
Returning heavenward with a smile,
 On such a night as this !

Yet viewing in the depths afar
The glories of the jewelled night,
My feelings not unmingled are
With thoughts that make the heart more light !
For, gazing into heaven, I dream
Fond whispers come of love and peace ;
And very near my lost ones seem
On such a night as this !

THE VOICE OF DUTY.

FARTHER, farther from the busy,
Bustling haunts of men,
Ne'er to mingle with the dizzy,
Heedless crowd again,
Let my clueless path meander
Where no curious mortals be ;
Where not e'en a thought can wander
After me.

Evening, like a gentle lover,
Woos the earth to rest ;
Bird, and flower, and star above, are
All supremely blest :
Nature glories in her gladness—
Oh, how bright and fair is she !
But there steals a shade of sadness
Over me.

Yes, I would that I were sleeping
In my dreamless bed,
With the flowers above me weeping
Dew-drops o'er the dead ;
Only seeks my yearning spirit
Freedom from its cumb'ring clay—
Burning thoughts, like wings, would bear it
Far away.

Cold is earth, while tempests dreary
Sweep the sea of life ;
I am weary—oh, how weary !—
Of its fitful strife :
To the starlit realms above me
Is it wrong to wish to flee ?
'T is the home of those who love me—
Even me.

Hark ! what gentle voice is calling,
Faint, but sweet and clear,
Like celestial music falling
On my spirit's ear ?
On the faintest breeze of vesper
Floats the fairy melody,
And I seem to hear a whisper
Meant for me.

“ O discouraged, shrinking spirit,
Waken from thy dreams ;
Slight the pleasure, less the merit,
In such aimless themes !

If the earth be full of beauty,
And the starry upper sea,
'T is to teach a lesson of duty
Unto thee.

" Songsters, to whom thou dost listen
With a sad delight ;
Flowers, whose pearly dew-drops glisten
In the morning light ;
Stars, that twinkle in the distance,
High on Night's majestic brow,
Serve the end of their existence :
Say, dost thou ?

" Not by wishing, not by dreaming
'Mid the birds and flowers ;
Not by gazing at the gleaming
Stars at twilight hours ;
Not by vague, impatient yearning
For the glories thou shalt see
When the bright, eternal morning
Dawns for thee.

" There are righteous causes pleading
Earnestly for aid ;
Weak but willing spirits needing
That their hands be stayed :
Evil triumphs, justice tarries,
Error thrives luxuriously ;
Close about thee always there is
Work for thee.

“God hath given the blest assurance
Right shall yet prevail ;
Fearless courage, firm endurance,
Cannot wholly fail :
Though the tempests gather o’er thee,
As thy day thy strength shall be ;
There is joy and triumph for thee—
Even thee !”

THE QUAKER BOY’S SERMON.

THE sunlight of summer was flooding
With glory each valley and hill,
The flowers were drowsily nodding,
The Sabbath was peaceful and still,
When a handful of quaint, quiet Quakers,
With hat-brims uncommonly broad,
At the “meeting-house” silently gathered,
To worship and wait upon God.

They sat, in the sweet Sabbath silence,
Till nearly an hour passed away,
In patience awaiting “the Spirit”
To “move” them to speak, sing, or pray ;
When a boy—as yet one of the children
Of whom the dear Saviour has taught
“Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven”—
Arose, all absorbed with a thought.

One earnest and pure aspiration
His spirit completely possessed,
And to God it was, more than the meeting,
His simple, sweet thought was addressed :
" I wish that the Lord, He would make us,"
Exclaimed the poor, grammarless lad,
" All gooder, and *gooder*, and GOODER,
Till nothing was left that was bad ! "

Enough ! for no sermon, though woven
With highest rhetorical art,
Could have wakened so pure a devotion
In every worshipping heart ;
In silence the company parted,
Ne'er thinking to smile or applaud,
Enrapt with unspeakable yearning
For holiness, goodness, and God.

Then thought I, alas for the preachers,
Who journey this weary world through,
Where error and crime are combating
The noble, the pure, and the true,
Yet dream of no loftier mission
Than winning the public applause,
And hearing the multitude murmur,
" How splendid a sermon that was ! "

Alas for the dialecticians
With arguments many and strong,
To prove by impregnable logic
That all other churches are wrong ;

Who assume that to their careful keeping
The keys of the kingdom are given ;
That *they*, and *their* church, and *their* -ism,
Are specially favored of Heaven !

Alas for that kind of religion
Whose precepts and practice are built
Far more on a fear of damnation
Than hatred of sin and its guilt ;
For the souls, indescribably little,
With infinite selfishness crammed,
Who, if they can be saved, are contented
The rest of the world should be damned !

Oh, for less of this beautiful talking,
That 's nothing but beautiful talk !
Oh, for less of this closely built logic,
Unyielding—and cold—as a rock !
Oh, for more of self-heedless sin-hating ;
More souls for the grand brotherhood,
Ignoring all doctrinal fetters,
Whose creed is, to *be* and *do* good !

For the Father, He evermore loveth
The heart, not the head, that is true,
Nor careth for names, whether Orthodox,
Catholic, Infidel, Jew ;
Inspiring and helping the humble,
Who long, with the poor Quaker lad,
To grow better, and nobler, and purer,
Till nothing is left that is bad !

SECOND CHILDHOOD.

O H, let no scornful word be said,
But ever love and reverence him
Who sits amid the deepening shade
Of life's last twilight gray and dim.

When dotage spends its fleeting breath
In selfish lusts, and greed for gain,
And cares of life, and fears of death,
How sad is "second childhood" then !

How blest, when, as the years increase,
Its toils and cares and perils o'er,
The soul sits down in perfect peace,
With earth behind and heaven before !

Content, till called to journey hence ;
The model of a Christian sage ;
Yet young in heart and innocence—
Childlike, not childish, in his age.

To him each circling season sends
Maturity, without decay,
Till life's long evening twilight blends
With the glad dawn of endless day.

Oh, happy home, to whom the fates
Award this rare and priceless prize—
Some lingering saint, who calmly waits
His late translation to the skies !

THE BEAUTIFUL LAND.

STRANGE stories they tell of a Beautiful Land,
Portrayed by the prophet and sung by the bard,
Where the good of all ages, a glorified band,
Now rest from their labors and reap their reward ;
A land without suffering, or sorrow, or care,
An evermore painless and blissful abode,
With joy on each wave of the palpitant air,
And the light of the realm is the smile of its God.
And the loved, who are lost from the land of their birth,
Have but taken a day's journey thither, and stand,
Star-crowned, and redeemed from the errors of earth,
On the shores of the Beautiful Land.

Yet sometimes I pause, when the story I hear ;
When hope has grown feeble, and faith become dim ;
And my spirit lies down in the dark, with a fear
Lest the Beautiful Land be the myth of a dream ;
Lest when the frail bark of my being has passed
To Eternity's ocean, beyond mortal sight,

By its billows o'erwhelmed, it shall perish at last,
And sink to the fathomless caverns of night :
Of the hopes that beguile us on life's weary way,
The bright, baseless pictures our fancy has planned,
Is the latest illusion to bless and betray,
This dream of the Beautiful Land ?

Thus only I question and doubt of our goal,
When hope wanders darkling, and faith has grown dim;
For the one, keenest, infinite thirst of the soul
Was not given a world, to be mocked by a dream.
They return not, who pass to that mystical clime ;
Yet sometimes when over the dying we bow,
The glazing eye lights with a vision sublime,
And a radiance seraphic transfigures the brow ;
Eternity's billows pulse steady and slow,
We are left all alone on the desolate strand,
We bury our dead—but forever we know
They had looked on the Beautiful Land.

We speak of its murmuring streams as they flow
Through its forests of palm and its meadows of green,
Of its mountains of jasper, reflecting the glow
From the walls of the city no mortal hath seen ;
Of fresh scenes of beauty that constantly press
The soul to fresh ecstasies strange and intense—
But how feeble are emblems like these to express
The pleasures that wait on our glorified sense !
And the odors that steal from the hills of the west,
When the flowers by zephyrs of twilight are fanned,
Are not such as greet those who enter their rest
On the shores of the Beautiful Land !

And the cherished and lost—parent, lover, or child,—

Whose dear, dying face we baptized with our tears,
And buried, and mourned for—yet worked on, and
smiled,

While our hearts crept alone through the long, weary
years—

When others shall weep over *our* faces thus,

When *we* shall be called the dark river to stem,
We shall find all our darlings there, waiting for us,

Who so long, and so needlessly, mourned over them !

Oh, joy, joy eternal ! when, reft of our clay,

Companions and families together shall stand,
And bathe in the blaze of ineffable day,
On the hills of the Beautiful Land !

HEARTH AND HOME.

I 'VE roamed, in youth's enchanted hours.
O'er many a distant land,
Where richer fields and fairer flowers
By spicy gales are fanned ;
Where sunlit isles in silence sleep
Upon a tranquil sea :
But in my heart enshrined more deep,
One spot shall ever be.

Chorus—No joys are half so pure and bright,
Wherever we may roam,
As those that shed their tender light
About the hearth and home !

Low joys of sense the soul beguile
To woes for after years ;
The wine-cup wears a sparkling smile,
But poisons while it cheers ;
Fame's beacon light, from high and far,
Lures with deceitful ray ;
Ambition's bright and baleful star
Beams only to betray.—*Chorus*.

From scenes of weary toil to go,
When day begins to wane,
Where eyes with lovelight all aglow
Watch at the window-pane ;
Where, eager for the first caress,
Our nestlings cluster 'round—
In this full cup of happiness
No bitter dregs are found.—*Chorus*.

Though some have passed beyond the skies,
And from the azure sea,
Methinks their calm and peaceful eyes,
Like stars, look down on me ;
They who remain seem still more near ;
And every sacred spot
To my departed darlings dear
Can never be forgot.—*Chorus*.

GOOD-NIGHT SONG.

“**S**ING,” ye say, “a song for you,
In the waning light ;
Something old or something new,
That shall be a fit adieu,
Before we part to-night.”

We have been so gay and glad
In our full delight,
Even music scarce can add
To the pleasures we have had
Upon this happy night.

Time, for aught we sing or say,
Will not cease his flight ;
Sweetest moments will not stay—
Oh, how swift they pass away
We all have seen to-night !

Vanished now is mirth and glee—
Yet our hearts are light ;
Many a season may we see
When we shall as happy be
As we have been to-night.

In our paths may fortune fling
Pleasures pure and bright ;
Tender thoughts and memories bring—
Such as thrill us while we sing :—
Good-night, dear friends, good-night !

MYRTLE IN HEAVEN.

Born and died September 25, 1867.

MY child ! my loved, lost, ever-present Myrtle !
Just fifteen weary years ago to-day
Thou stood one flitting moment at the portal
Of life, and then forever fled away.

Was earthly life, to thy prophetic vision,
And what it held in store for thee, foreshown
So clearly that thou fled to realms elysian,
And left us here, in darkness and alone !

To-day my soul has dwelt apart in sadness ;
The past was present, and I lived again
That day, which dawned in bright and cloudless glad-
ness,
To end in anguish never known till then.

Fierce equinoctial storms were brooding o'er us
The skies were dark with elemental strife,
And winds and rains combined in dismal chorus
The night when thou wert welcomed into life.

The tempest passed ; the stars came, and the morning ;
I folded thee in gentle, close embrace,
And with a tender, deep, and voiceless yearning,
Looked down into thy sweet, unconscious face.

I watched the growing, golden-hued aurora,
That brightened into day serene and mild,
And prayed—may this but emblemize the story
Of what thine earthly life shall be, my child !.

We heard the baby voice in accents tender,
The pleading cadence of a loving tone,
Entreating aid we knew not how to render,
Until the cooing call became a moan.

We recked not that the sky became re-clouded ;
We heeded not the slowly falling rain ;
The night came, and the world was overshadowed
(But what cared we ?) with storm and gloom again.

We thought not that the voice of gentle pleading
Would soon be hushed, and heard on earth no more ;
We saw not that our darling was receding,
Fast, fast, and faster, from this mortal shore.

Night flung upon the world her silken fetter ;
Our Myrtle slept ; so sweetly that we said :
“ When she awakes she surely will be better.”
Then some one gently touched her. She was dead.

Beside the grave I did not bend to kiss her,
Or place my hand upon her glossy hair ;
Some said : " She was so young he will not miss her " ;
And some replied : " He does not seem to care."

I made but little outward show of grieving,
Nor wrung my hands, nor wildly called her name ;
In some mute, passive way I kept on living,
And to my daily duties went and came.

But all these lonely years I have been mourning,
With sadness that would not be reconciled ;
And still my hungry heart is ever turning—
Ah ! whither shall it turn to find my child ?

Sometimes upon a summer eve I wander,
And sit beneath the venerable tree
That sentinels the village church-yard yonder,
From which a little grassy mound I see.

And there a thousand vague and weird suggestions
My heart has many a time and vainly conned ;
But evermore remain my eager questions
Unanswered from the solemn, dark Beyond.

I ask, has one whose lamp of life was lighted
In that same instant to expire again—
A bud that in its blossoming was blighted,
Its petals scattered by the wind and rain ;—

[First
suggestion.]

Has any thing so fragile and fugescent,
A breath that ceased as it began to be,
Received, within that instant evanescent,
The glorious dower of immortality ?

Or were the words the Nazarean Teacher
Spake to the boasting sons of Abraham,
Not for himself, but every human creature,
When he declared : " Ere Abraham was, I am ! " [Second
suggestion.

Has every soul come down through countless ages,
Without beginning, as without an end,
Through multifarious phases, forms, and stages,
Which finite science cannot comprehend ?

Or from the Infinite, Eternal Spirit [Third
suggestion.
Are atoms separated and set free,
Which to a great or less degree inherit
The power and nature of divinity,

While every sentient spark or emanation
From (yet within) the universal whole,
Is individualized through incarnation,
Thenceforth a separate and immortal soul ?

When ocean waves before the winds are driven, [Fourth
suggestion.
And high in air their threatening crests uprear,
Some spray-drop from the foamy summit riven,
A moment mounts, a tiny, separate sphere—

Then falls, and mingles with the heaving surges
 Of the illimitable parent sea,
 And nevermore in primal form emerges,
 Or re-assumes its lost identity.

Is thus the soul of man a moment lifted
 From out the all-originating whole,
 With transient, seeming self-existence gifted,
 A severed spray-drop from the Universal Soul—

Freighted with promise, hope, and fond endeavor,
 Swiftly its bright and brief career to run,
 Then sink into the sea, to be forever
 One with the Infinite, Eternal One ?

Imagine what surprise it would awaken
 Should some inquirer seriously say :
 " I pray thee, tell me, whither have they taken
 The rainbow that was yonder yesterday ? "

[Fifth
 suggestion.]

The rain by sunshine rendered iridescent
 That bow of promise brilliantly upreared ;
 But when the causes were no longer present,
 The bright resulting iris disappeared.

That rainbow has not journeyed to a distance ;
 It waits not for us in some fairer sky ;
 It simply is no longer in existence :
 Is this a type of human destiny ?

Are memory, reason, will, and sense of duty,
Our consciousness of self, and joy, and pain,
Our love of truth, and right, and friends, and beauty,
Phenomena that perish with the brain ?

Are thoughts that waken reverence or laughter,
Our bright ideals, aspirations high,
Our faith in God, our hope in a Hereafter,
But rainbow-pictures on our mental sky ?

Does some atomic, chemic combination
Originate the thing that " life " we call,
And with our physical disintegration
And functional subsidence, Death end all ?

Or is it not more likely that our fancies
Of what the future has in store for us,
Based on our present life and circumstances,
All, all, are false, absurd, ridiculous ?

[A more probable
suggestion.

The ancients dreamed, and told in song and story,
That far beyond the gates of Hercules,
The ocean's billows and the sunset's glory,
Arose a continent in Western seas :

They pictured it a land almost elysian ;
Its people, climate, fruits, were vaguely guessed ;
And yet, how different was their dim prevision
From this, the real Atlantis of the West !

So, when we rise above our low ideal,
Beyond the mists that compass us about,
May we not find how different from the real
Is all that now we fancy, dream, and doubt?

If consciousness, love, worship, aspiration,
Be only some brain-aura's fitful play,
Resulting from electric perturbation,
To end with the machinery's decay,

[If materialism
be a fact,

Then is this universe about us wholly
A wondrous, gloriously devised domain
Of phantoms lured to nothingness by folly,
With nothing in it real—except our pain.

And then my child is—nothing! Oh, 't were better
(If I were driven to this dread belief)
For me to hurry onward and forget her,
Since vain alike are love and hope and grief.

But if the soul be real and immortal
That for a season animates our clay,
This world the vestibule, and death the portal
Which opens to a world of endless day ;—

[If immortality
be a fact,

Though to that realm of light and joy she hasted,
While I was left in anguish keen and wild,
It may be all the love has not been wasted
That I so long have lavished on my child.

For this, I hold, is not to be disputed :

We cannot truly say, "The soul lives on,"

If into something else it be transmuted,

With all its attributes and powers gone.

[Persistence of
personality.]

Its firm identity is not abolished

By simply passing through the narrow door ;

Its loves and tastes and selfhood not demolished

Because its bark has touched the farther shore.

Within these narrow walls I sit and ponder

Alone amid the gathering gloom of night ;

But when the morning comes, then I shall wander

Beyond these walls, and out into the light.

But in that freedom and illumination

No personal trait or attribute shall die ;

Each longing, taste, desire, and aspiration,

Will be unchanged—for I shall still be "I."

But wandering at whatever time or distance

From this, my primal home, I think that yet

The ties that bound me during earth-existence,

The friends I knew, I never could forget.

I think my soul, with frequent retrospection,

Would seek the sphere from which I had been reft,

And long to be remembered with affection

By those on earth whom I had loved and left.

If near to us her shining spirit hover,
 May not our darling be the happier
 To know that we remember her and love her,
 And oft and fondly think and speak of her ?

My angel child ! since we two met and parted, [Child-growth
in eternity.]
 Upon that memorable autumnal day :
 I, here to grope in darkness weary-hearted ;
 And thou to journey on thy starry way—

In all these years that we have dwelt asunder,
 (Though it may be less distant than we thought,)
 I often question, meditate, and wonder,
 What varied changes have in thee been wrought ?

Wert thou received into that world eternal
 The feeble, helpless thing we welcomed thee ?
 Or do the souls that throng that realm supernal
 Know naught of either age or infancy ?

Are differences of feature, form, and stature
 Known in the land where the Immortal are ?
 Or are diversities of spirit-nature
 The means by which they know each other there ?

My thoughts recur to that celestial Aiden,
 As being the serene and blessed place
 Where waits for me a tall and dark-eyed maiden,
 Of stately mien and calm and quiet grace.

Do mental growth and knowledge come un-
studied,

[Studies in the
Summer-Land.

Possessed at once to uttermost extent ?
Or must the children there, though disembodied,
Pass through some process of development ?

If they have need of heavenly guides and teachers,
To form the intellect and character,
I wonder unto whom, of all His creatures,
The Lord hath given charge concerning her !

If those whose earthly lives were spent in gaining
The fragmentary lore that we possess,
Are yonder given the glorious task of training
Immortal souls for endless usefulness,

I know that some who crossed the Silent River
Long years before her, for my sake would come
Down to the shore to meet her, and to give her
A loving welcome to her shining home ;

And ever since, in answer to my yearning,
These may have gently led her by the hand,
And taught her what the little ones are learning
Amid the gardens of the Summer-Land.

I question, is there no allotted measure
Of duty in the mansions of the blest ?
Have they but one eternal round of pleasure,
One Sabbath scene of everlasting rest ?

[Ministering
spirits.

Sure, God must know this world is full of anguish ;
That truth and right are trampled everywhere ;
That multitudes in life-long sorrow languish,
Or sink in sullen gloom and dark despair ;

That e'en the wisest know but very little ;
That e'en the strongest are but weak and frail ;
That firmest resolutions are but brittle,
And prayers and tears too oft of no avail.

Can He whose other name is Love, be willing
To sit unmoved on His eternal throne,
While agonized humanity is filling
The universe with its sad, ceaseless moan ?

When souls escape the clay that has enshrined them,
To dwell forever in a happier sphere,
Must we believe that they have left behind them
All sympathy for their companions here ?

I do believe, were I to rise to-morrow,
Feeling and knowing what I do to-day—
What sore temptations, weaknesses, and sorrow
Beset my comrades on their earthly way,—

I would not soar to some unmeasured distance
To join the jubilant seraphic throng,
And spend my countless ages of existence
In one eternal round of praise and song :

But this would be my prayer: "O loving Father,
Bid me not hasten to some shining place
Where *I* am to be happy; let me rather
Remain where I can serve my stricken race.

"Grant me the power to make some pathway brighter,
To lift some soul from ignorance and sin;
Some bowed and breaking hearts to render lighter,
That hope, and peace, and joy, may enter in."

If earth's embodied millions are outnumbered
A million times by the stupendous throng,
Whom, of their mortal frames now disencumbered,
Unconsciously we daily move among—

Have all this countless multitude no mission,
No glorious ministry of usefulness?
Or have they lost the power and the ambition
Their friends on earth to benefit and bless?

Or are the innumerable host of angels
And loving spirits of the glorified,
Bright, present, tireless, vigilant evangels,
Unseen by us, forever at our side?

Sometimes I think it may be no delusion—
The pleasing fancy that my child is near,
And that I feel, amid the rude confusion,
The influence of her serener sphere.

[Not far away.]

I doubt that in the church-yard she is sleeping ;
I somehow seem to have become aware
That she eluded us while we were weeping,
And that " my child " was never buried there.

Just where she is I cannot say for certain ;
I feel as if she were not far away—
As if she had but hid behind a curtain,
As little children sometimes do in play.

Or, half-unconsciously amid my labors,
I wonder where she is this afternoon—
As though she were but calling at a neighbor's,
And certainly would be returning soon.

If now, recarnate from the ambient ether,
She stood before me and were recognized
Through all the angel graces that enwreath her,
I think I hardly would be much surprised.

Sometimes, alas, it is not wholly pleasant—
This consciousness of angel ministry,
This feeling that my child is always present,
With pure and placid eyes beholding me.

[A purifying
presence.]

I might by motives low be animated,
And my ignoble purpose need not show ;
I might in soul become contaminated,
And those who meet me daily need not know ;

I might deceive the children who are living
This earthly life, and dwelling by my side ;
But I am certain there is no deceiving
The one who has been raised and glorified.

More potent than an orator discoursing
Upon the penalties that follow sin,
She seems an "outside conscience," reinforcing
The dictates of the "still small voice" within.

And God may know how many a sore temptation
I have escaped, unscathed and undefiled,
Because the thought of such a degradation
Put me to shame in presence of my child.

For one brief hour, such fair, delicious fancies
My barren life illuminate and bless ;
But oh, their very loveliness enhances
The after-sense of loss and loneliness !

[Recurring
doubts and
fears.

For still the thought re-enters, dark and chilling,
All this is something that I can not *know*—
That mainly I believe because so willing,
So strongly anxious that it should be so.

Although the dower of endless life be given,
With chance to climb far on the starry way,
To every soul that breathes, including even
The child that lives for but a single day ;—

Infinitude is the domain assigned them :

But, should we journey to the nearest star,
Our retinue of worlds—could we but find them ;
Would be as dust upon the summer air.

Shall spirits seek, with an undying yearning,
Some little spot upon this little earth,
But rarely wandering thence, and oft returning,
Simply because it was their place of birth ?

The bird that over land and sea is winging
Through summer skies its free and gladsome flight,
In liquid tones melodious ever singing
The story of its love and its delight ;

What cares it even for the brooding mother
That warmed it into being with her breast ?
That such a forest tree, and not another,
Was that which sheltered the maternal nest ?

And then I question, heartsore and affrighted,
Why should a spirit seek this world again,
That from its clay so soon was disunited,
Ere it knew any thing on earth but pain ?

Why should a soul that once has journeyed over,
And finds before itself infinity
Wherein to learn, pursue, enjoy, discover,
Ever revisit this cold world, or me ?

The years upon my head are multiplying,
And my appointed time can not be far,
To leave this land of suffering and dying,
And pass to that where the immortal are :

[We soon
shall see.

But in the morning, when the mists are lifted
That now surround me and obscure my sight,—
When by the hand of Death the veil is rifted
That shrouds my soul, and shuts me from the light,—

Amid that dazzling and bewildering splendor,
Methinks that I shall listen anxiously,
To hear a voice affectionate and tender,
Whose tones shall seem not wholly new to me ;

I shall expect to find there, waiting for me,
A spirit that in some way I shall know,
Whose sum of earth-existence, brief and stormy,
Was one day, spent beside me long ago.

And if I find her not in waiting yonder,
To be at once my guide and minister,
Heart-hungry yet, and lonely, I shall wander
Through all the starry spheres in search of her.

Whatever joys in Eden's bowers be given,
My soul will still refuse to be beguiled
Of its desire and longing, though in heaven—
Not wholly blest until I find my child !

BEFORE THE LAVA-BEDS.

MONDAY NIGHT, APRIL 14, 1873.

MIDNIGHT reigns, and darkness hovers
O'er a martial garrison
Which our nation's ensign covers
In the wilds of Oregon ;
But the foe, that flag defying—
Savage Modocs, now at bay—
In the Lava-beds are lying,
Waiting for the dawn of day.

Near the white men, camped beside them,
Are their native red allies,
Come to fight for them, or guide them,
Or to guard them from surprise.
White and red are brave and daring,
And amid the starless gloom
White and red are both preparing
For the fray that is to come.

Well they know that of their number
Some must soon confront their God—
This to be their final slumber
Till they sleep beneath the sod !
Yet in what a varied manner
Those who wait the coming fight,
Sheltered by that starry banner,
Spend this dark and awful night !

Hark ! the sound of many voices
From the white men's camping ground,
And the wild, discordant noises
As the festive cup goes round ;
Voices maudlin and unsteady
Raise the Bacchanalian cry :
" Here is to the dead already,
And to him who next shall die ! "

There are other echoes floating
On the midnight breeze afar—
Vague, familiar sounds denoting
Where the Warm Spring Indians are ;
'T is the voice of prayer ascending
From their camp upon the knoll,
With the simple music blending :
" Jesus, lover of my soul ! "

Hear the whites, in drunken revels,
Frenzy-fired and reckless men :
" Death to yonder savage devils ! "
" Fill the flowing bowl again ! "
See the Indian warriors kneeling,
Listen to their humble plea,
And their hymn to Heaven appealing :
" Rock of Ages, cleft for me ! "

On the morrow came the battle ;
Slaughtered in the Modoc snare,
White and red men fell like cattle,
Leaving half their number there.

O self-righteous, proud Caucasian,
Look upon them, side by side—
Tell me which in nobler fashion,
White or red man, lived and died !

IRIS AT MIDNIGHT.

HARK ! through the lone night comes a sudden
wild cry !

Mark yonder dull gleam as it mounts to the sky !
Hear the clangor of bells through the fierce, lurid glare !
'T is the fire-signal, curdling the fear-haunted air !

For the once, let us join the fast-gathering band
Of scarce-awake, spectral spectators, who stand
'Mid the lowering smoke, and the dull, sullen roar,
Like a concourse of shades on the Stygian shore.

The engines are tirelessly pouring their flood,
For the flames to lick up as the tiger licks blood ;
And the mist disappears in the demon's hot breath,
As mortals go down at the summons of death !

But see ! in the midst of the fast-falling spray,
What rainbow-tints glimmer and changefully play !
Where Ruin holds revel and Wrath has his home,
Queen Iris has builded her many-hued dome !

Hail, bright bow of promise ! fair Daughter of Light !
Besieging the realm of Destruction and Night !
Pressing closer as wilder the red billows swell,
Like an angel assailing the portals of hell !

Sad soul—falter not amid terrors and tears !
Eternal delights shall crown desolate years :
Môre fair, 'mid the flames mounting fiercer and higher,
Bends the Iris of Hope o'er the ocean of fire !

LAZARUS AND DIVES.

WHEN I was young I read the strange, old story
Of Lazarus begging at the rich man's door :
How Lazarus died, and rose to realms of glory,
To dwell with Abraham for evermore.

And how, in course of time, the rich man died,
And went to hell ; where, languishing among
Tormenting flames, to Abraham he cried
For water wherewithal to cool his tongue.

But vain was his entreaty ; for, alas !
Betwixt the world above and that below
There was a "great gulf fixed," which none could pass,
To reach, or leave, that world of endless woe.

I said : " The Mighty One who reigns above
Revealed not this ; for God is more than great—
Is good and merciful ; His name is love ;
And this is infinite, eternal hate ! "

Again I read the story ; and at last
One word surprised me more than I can tell—
The first that Father Abraham addressed
The rich man, writhing in the flames of hell.

I saw he called him not " Mine enemy,"
Nor hailed him as a " brother " or a " friend " ;
There is a nearer, dearer, tenderer tie
The heart of God and man may apprehend.

Brothers may bless and brothers may betray ;
And fond and close the tide of friendship is ;
But not of these, as of the son, we say :
" Behold, all that the Father hath is his."

And Abraham called him " Son." That word reveals
The boundless love that fills the Father's heart ;
No wrath nor vengeance toward His child He feels,
Nor follows him with hate-envenomed dart.

Not they who throng His home of light and bliss,
Sin-washed, or sinless, share His love alone ;
It overspreads the bottomless abyss,
And even to the lost soul cries, " My son ! "

The High and Holy One who reigns above,
Though man may sink where help nor hope can come,
Still ever loves him with a tenderer love
Than David's for his dead boy Absalom.

But some one said : " This mystery explain :
Why should a kind and loving Father send
Such punishment of ever-present pain,
For which there is no remedy nor end ?

O fool ! wert thou to shut thee from the sun
In some dark cave, or damp and narrow cell,
Where heaven's fresh breath and beauty were unknown,
And noxious, health-destroying vapors dwell,

Till chills convulsed and fevers racked thy frame,
And keen rheumatic anguish crippled thee,
Of damp and darkness born—would'st thou exclaim :
" See how the cruel sun hath tortured me " ?

Then charge it not upon the wrath of God,
That heavenly light grows far away and dim,
And pains and perils throng the thorny road
That leads the wandering soul away from Him.

Nay, more ; the very torture we bewail
Is made a messenger in God's employ,—
An angel sent to win, warn, urge, compel
The wanderer back to life and light and joy.

Each pang of anguish is a tongue of fire,
Commissioned from the joy-encircled throne,
To voice the infinite, divine desire :

“Sinner, return ! I love thee, O my son !”

THE PHILOSOPHICAL SPARROWS.

“What fools these mortals be !”

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

TWO bright, intelligent sparrows sat
On a telegraph wire, in social chat.

Said one : “What a lovely morn is this !
All nature so peaceful—bathed in bliss !

“How fair is the earth that under us lies !
How pure and serene are the summer skies !

“To the east, behold where the ocean laves
One half of the world with its restless waves ;

“To the west outspreads a mighty domain,
With thousands of miles of mountain and plain ;

“From the heart of the continent, down to the sea,
A river rolls hitherward, broad and free ;

"In the mouth of the river an island lies,
Almost submerged when the tide-waves rise,—

"A reedy morass, with reaches of sand,
So low we can hardly call it 'land,'—

"A spot all desolate, desert, and drear,
Except that a half-score hovels are here,

"Wherein, I have heard my parents tell,
Some poor and ignorant fishermen dwell ;

"And a light-house tall, with its beacon bright,
Looks out on the ocean and the night,

"While up to its glaring eye of fire
Extends this tiny telegraph wire—

"A wire by kindest wisdom planned,
And built by some beneficent hand,

"That here we birds of the air may sit,
And see what is going on under it ;

"That here in our weary flight we may rest,
And build in the top of the poles a nest :

"What gratitude do we sparrows owe
To the master-mind that has planned it so !"

Here offered a chance for the other bird
('T was the first he had found) to utter a word :

"I see with keen and sincere regret,
You cling to old superstitions yet :

"Such reason as you are gifted with
Should know that the ' Master-mind ' is a myth :

" 'T is the wofulest egotism thus
To deem that the world was made for us :

" This wire—so scientists represent—
Results from the ' law of development ' ;

" It grew from the light-house dome, it is said,
As a hair grows out from the human head ;

" Or a closer parallel to apply,
Like a lash from the lid of the human eye :

" But the tower is tall, and the winds are rough,
And the rest of the wires are broken off ;

" But this—by accident, not by skill—
Has caught upon posts that hold it still,

" Till it reaches at last the river side,
And disappears in the flowing tide.

" 'T is no kind hand for our comfort contrives,
But in the life-struggle ' the fittest survives. ' "

Here sparrow the first spake up again
(I give you his language in that of men) :

"Lo, where to the river the land comes down,
The people have builded a busy town,

"Whose domes of splendor and mansions grand
In lofty and peerless beauty stand ;

"And cooling fountains, and gardens fair,
Rejoice in the morning sunlight there.

"Do you know, sometimes I have heard it said,
That deep, unseen, on the river bed,

"This wire, that vanishes here from our eyes,
At the depth of a hundred fathoms lies,

"And crossing the channel deep and wide,
Emerges on reaching the other side,

"And held upon poles again, high in the air,
It threads the streets of the city there,

"And passing on to the mountain height,
That far to the westward bounds our sight,

"It climbs the cliff to its summit high,
And pierces a hole in the solid sky,

"And taps the fountain of heavenly fire,
That downward flows through the hollow wire,

"Whence comes the glorious light, they say,
This light-house throws far over the bay."

The other responded : " I have heard
That fable, ridiculous and absurd :

" But, credulous comrade, when have you,
Or any sparrow you ever knew,

" Gone downward, a hundred fathoms deep,
Where the starfish dance and the mermaids sleep,

" And traced the wire, for a mile or more,
To see it emerge on the further shore ?

" Such fanciful theories, wild and bold,
Are most unprofitable, I hold :

" There is more to learn of certain, exact,
Acknowledged, and indisputable fact,

" (Aside from matters that tend to strife,)
Than a sparrow can learn in all his life ;

" The wiser view of the case affirms
We had better be gathering bugs and worms,

" And bringing them home to our hungry brood,
That wait in their nests for daily food,

" Than wander amid the mazes of doubt,
Discoursing of things we can never find out :

" And I shall undoubtedly live as long,
And sing as happy and sweet a song,

"Although I hold that the wire extends
To the water's edge, and that there it ends."

Then spake up sparrow number one,
As soon as his logical comrade was done :

"Look yonder, where the populous town
To the western shore of the river comes down ;

"Somebody—indeed, there are two, I think,—
Step into a boat at the water's brink ;

"Their craft is rapidly coming this way—
The first that has crossed the river to-day ;

"A stalwart boatman bends to the oar
And brings the boat to the island shore ;

"Its bottom grates on the shelving sand,
A gray-haired passenger leaps to the land ;

"At parting I hear the boatman call
The old man 'doctor'—and that is all ;

"The doctor is hastening swift and straight
To the light-house yonder—he enters the gate ;

"The keeper (I heard about daylight
Some sparrow say) has been sick all night.

"From what I have seen, it would surely seem
The tidings were carried across the stream ;

"The doctor heard, in his home over there,
The cry of distress, the earnest prayer,

"And early this morning has hastened away,
And come in his boat across the bay,

"And now will try what medical skill
Can do for the light-house man that is ill."

"My friend," said the other, "the latest word
Of science you seem to have never heard ;

"The hasty conclusions that you draw
Ignore entirely the 'reign of law' ;

"In the realm over yonder, pray understand,
A President rules, supreme in command ;

"A Congress and House of Executive sees
That the Cabinet carries out all his decrees :

"Each State and city is governed again
By a Mayor and Senate of Aldermen ;

"The Ruler is wise and worthy of trust,
The laws are mild, and wholesome, and just,

"But fixed, immutable as the rock
That braves the storm and the earthquake shock,

"Nor can His grand and eternal plan
Be altered by any appeal of man ;

" He predetermines by firm decree
What every one's daily duties shall be ;

" No cry of distress, nor voice of prayer,
Can change the order of things over there ;

" The doctor's coming is part of the plan
Laid out for to-day since the city began ;

" If an hour from now he re-travels his track,
You may know it was planned for him to go back ;

" Whatever the light-house man may desire,
He might as well whisper his wants to this wire,

" As send them thither, expecting to break
The laws the Great Ruler has chosen to make.

" Moreover, methought I heard you say,
This boat was the first that had crossed to-day :

" Then how could the call of the sick man come
To the doctor's ear in his far-off home ?

" Have you heard any wild, appealing cry
On the wings of the morning air go by ?

" Has a subterraneous way been found,
Under the river and underground,

" Whereby a messenger may be sent
From the island to the continent ?

" I am not stubborn—I am content
To yield to reason and argument,

" And adopt the theory you maintain,
If you will in any way explain

" *How* any such news could possibly go !"
The other said : " Really, I don't know !"

How near, and yet how woefully far
From the truth these dull philosophers are,

As they argue, and wonder, and muse, and inquire—
Still sitting upon that telegraph wire !

AFTER ALL.

WHAT though fortune smile on others,
But reserve for me its wrath ?
Though the rains that bless my brothers
Burst in tempests on my path ?
They have wealth to hoard or scatter,
While my gains are few and small :
By and by it may not matter,
After all.

What though I am slow in learning,
While my fellows onward press?
Though each wild, ambitious yearning
End in weary helplessness?
Though to some exalted station
I would climb—yet here must crawl—
May there not be compensation
After all?

Had my life been to my suiting,
Brilliant intellect my dower;
Had I wealth beyond computing,
Social station, fame, and power;
Satellites to fawn and flatter,
Servants waiting at my call—
Am I sure it would be better,
After all?

Had such fortune been accorded
Till my heart grew hard and cold,
And my soul debased and sordid
With the cankering lust for gold;
Till the weakness luxury nurses
Wrapped my spirit like a pall—
Wealth and ease had been but curses,
After all.

Grief and pain have brought me nearer
To my suffering fellow-men,
Till my view is broader, clearer,
Truer, than it would have been :

Sympathy hath countless treasures ;
And her touch electrical
Wakes to life our loftiest pleasures,
After all.

And my faults—God knows I hate them
Worse than poverty and pain ;
Yet may He not consecrate them
Even, to my final gain ?
Though my upward path be longer,
Stumbling, weeping when I fall,
May I not at last be stronger,
After all ?

When I know the deepest villain
Hath no sinful tendency
But what hath been, and is still, in
My own soul, though loathed by me—
Though the sinless may abhor him,
I, who know his bitter thrall,
Feel a boundless pity for him,
After all.

Thus my very sins engender
Stronger sense of brotherhood,
Till my heart is touched and tender
Toward the grovelling multitude ;
Even there the great Refiner,
Love, may rouse and re-install
Something higher and diviner
After all.

There are countless thousands lying
 'Mid the wrecks of ruined homes,
Out of rayless darkness crying
 For the help that never comes ;
There are millions writhing under
 Wrongs that sicken and appall :
Is it best for them, I wonder,
 After all ?

What are now the cares and crosses,
 Disappointments, terrors, tears,
Irremediable losses
 Of our earliest infant years ?
Some by patient retrospection
 Indistinctly we recall ;
Most are lost to recollection,
 After all.

Grant me only that this present
 World of weariness and strife
Be the brief and evanescent
 Prelude to an endless life—
Then the woes of earth-existence
 Will appear but few and small
Through a thousand years of distance,
 After all.

Think ye Milton still is mourning
 At the thought that he was blind ?
Or that Dante grieves concerning
 The unkindness of his kind ?

Or that David's joy is blighted
By the cruelty of Saul ?
Or has every wrong been righted,
After all ?

Heroes numberless have perished
Struggling for untrammelled thought—
Martyrs for the faith they cherished,
For the blessings they had brought ;
From the ashes or the prison
Of the vanquished radical,
Grander light and truth have risen,
After all.

Though the world, through darkling ages,
Her oppressors laud and crown,
Slight, and scorn, and mock her sages,
And her saviors trample down—
Lead them to the cross or scaffold,
Feed them hemlock, wormwood, gall—
Truth and justice are not baffled,
After all.

Problems I confront immenser
Than my puny powers can scan ;
Questions I can only answer :
" God's must be a perfect plan ! "
Good hath countless resurrections ;
Man, through many a woful fall,
Speeds to endless new perfections,
After all !

MY SILVER WEDDING.

April 16, 1882.

TO-NIGHT in life's career I pause,
While thoughts and memories backward flow,
Till I am standing where I was
Just five and twenty years ago.

I see the consecrated place—
I seem again to stand beside
The maiden fair, with modest face,
Who there and then became my bride

It was a union born of love,
As fond and pure as love could be ;
That timid girl was far above
All others in the world to me.

And to her trusting soul she said,
As we beside the altar stood :
"No other woman ever wed
A husband quite so true and good."

Ah ! little recked we what should come,
As we, beneath that April sky,
Went forth from childhood's happy home
To face the world—my wife and I.

Went boldly forth—for I was young,
And ignorant, and hopeful then,
Ambitious of a place among
The world's illustrious, honored men.

'T is wise to write, and well to read,
The stirring story of success,
That young and ardent souls may heed,
And work with faith and earnestness.

But lives that wreck, and hearts that fail,
Before their brief career is run,
Should leave the unrecorded tale
To perish in oblivion.

So let it pass, how, day by day,
My castles in the air went down ;
How, somewhere back, I missed the way
That leads to fortune and renown.

Had not ambition's fires within
My youthful soul so fiercely burned,
'T would not have caused a pang so keen,
When, as the years passed on, I learned,

That I must be but one amid
The millions of the common herd,
Then in eternal gloom be hid,
And never thought of afterward.

In spite of this, perhaps I might
Have schooled myself to be content,
Securing peace, if not delight,
As sunny summers came and went.

But oh ! I could not quite repress
The rankling, ever-brooding thought,
The hateful sense of helplessness
That each recurring season brought ;

The fact I could not choose but heed,
That I had garnered nothing more
For coming age, or hour of need,
Than I possessed the year before ;

That I was fettered to the sod—
Shut out from any leading part
In labors where my fellows trod
The fields of science or of art ;

That as the circling seasons went,
I still was failing to obtain
The culture and development
That is the right of every brain ;

That when I had aspired to win
An honored name and leading place
With those whose mission it has been
To benefit and bless their race,

My loathing soul must bend the knee,
Cast in the dust its diadem,
And drudge for men whose scorn of me
Could almost equal mine for them !

But something else, and something worse,
More keenly rankled in my breast :
The heavier loss, the darker curse,
Must fall on those I loved the best :

That to my children, too, the means
Of mental culture were denied—
The books and pictures, pleasant scenes,
That other parents could provide :

And what they cared and needed most
To see and hear, to have it so,
That I must count the little cost,
And say to them, " You cannot go ! "

That through the years my patient wife,
Who as a queen of hosts might reign,
Was drudging out her narrowed life
In cureless poverty and pain ;

Though well I knew if she had wed
When wealthier suitors bent the knee
And asked her hand, she might have led
A life of ease and luxury.

Thus all the visions fair and bright
That lured my eager feet to press
The path that scales the mountain height
To grand and self-achieved success,

Proved but the false mirage that mocks
The longings of the tortured soul,
While o'er the sharp and cruel rocks
I wandered farther from my goal,

Till night came down upon my path—
Night filled with phantoms dire and dread—
While howling tempests hurled their wrath
Upon my unprotected head.

When Hope at last had ceased her song,
And every star gone out on high,
My journey seemed so rough and long,
I laid me down and prayed to die :

“Or else,” I cried, “if such a thing
As ministering angels be,
O Father, bid some seraph bring
Light, comfort, peace, and strength to me !”

Then flashed a blaze of sudden light
Athwart the overarching dome,
As from some far, unmeasured height
A heavenly whisper seemed to come—

A tender voice, that said to me :
 " My child, my child, did'st thou not know,
I sent my angel unto thee
 A quarter century ago ! "

My eyes with manly tears grow dim,
 As looking back I contemplate
What almost seems to be the grim
 And bitter irony of fate :

For in my youthful pride I said :
 " Through life my strong protecting arm
Shall shield this shrinking, timid maid
 And shelter her from every harm."

With shame my grateful pulses stir,
 As I look down the years, and see
The little I have done for her—
 Her life-long sacrifice for me !

Before that young and loving wife,
 Beside the altar standing there,
The sunlit vista of her life
 Serenely opened far and fair :

Till rose a temple grandly bright,
 Which Love and Hope had builded high,
Whose dome of many-colored light
 And star-tipped turrets pierced the sky.

But words of man can only mar
The picture that he would impart—
How fond and sweet the fancies are
A woman hides within her heart.

And tongue of man can never tell
A woman's anguish of surprise,
When harsh experience rends the spell
That Love had woven for her eyes.

She sees the truth, but gives no sign—
She never tells the world how much,
That she had deemed almost divine,
Drops off at some Ithuriel touch.

This woman soon became aware
Of what her lips would not confess—
Her husband had the common share
Of human dross and selfishness.

To persons dwelling side by side,
On loftiest aims sincerely bent,
What meanings wonderfully wide
One word—like "love"—may represent !

I loved my wife—but looked afar,
Enrapt by visions bright and grand,
And struggling toward my beacon star,
'T was for myself I hoped and planned :

I loved my wife—with larger share
Of sentiment than sympathy ;
While her unceasing thought and care,
Her toil, her life, were all for me.

Ah, well do I remember how,
Through dreary days and nights of pain,
Her fingers soothed my fevered brow,
And cooled and calmed my burning brain,

Her feeble hand, in desperate strife,
Forced back the King of Terrors then ;
Her peerless courage saved my life—
But she was never well again !

When in the dust we left the clay,
That once was our beloved child,
As from the tomb we turned away,
For it she wept—for me she smiled !

And when the friends whom I had loved,
For selfish gain betrayed my trust,
When those whom I had toiled for, proved
Alike ungrateful and unjust ;

When prizes I had richly earned
Were clutched by undeserving hands
Of men whose car of triumph spurned
Its builder 'mid the burning sands ;

Until I said : " Here let it end ;
Life has no boon and no delight
Can win me longer to contend
In this unequal, hopeless fight : "

Ah, none could paint, and none can guess,
Save him whose life it glorifies,
The smile of wondrous tenderness
That then illumed her love-lit eyes,

As yet again her lips would say,
In tones that would my woes beguile,
" This sorrow, too, will pass away,
If we can wait a little while ! "

At last her brave and boundless hope,
O'ermastering penury and pain,
Would spur my spirit to look up,
And shame me to the fight again.

While in her soul all virtues blend,
One human trait was lacking there—
She had not power to comprehend
The meaning of the word " despair " !

It may be that her heart grew faint,
Her courage weak—I cannot say ;
I know she uttered no complaint,
She never faltered by the way :

Her dungeoned spirit, dauntless still,
Wove garlands for her prison bars,
Stole discipline from every ill,
And kept her forehead toward the stars !

Yea, half convinced me, even in spite
Of all the failures I had met,
That after all, the life-long fight
Might not be wholly hopeless yet !

And if I said in bitterness
Of soul that could not quite be hid :
“ Perhaps I might achieve success,
Were I to do as others did ”—

Then righteous indignation rose
To heat that nothing else could bring—
Her husband must not e'en suppose
The least dishonorable thing !

And thus between my wife and me
Almost unconsciously has grown
A stronger, tenderer tie than we
In youth's romance had ever known.

And dwelling daily by her side,
I came, in season, to possess,
And feel my nature dignified
By some of her unselfishness.

That heaven-sent spirit, bright and brave,
To me this blessed lesson taught :
To count the treasures that we have,
Instead of those that we have not !

Though far away, my thought recalls
Our home half hid by trees and flowers—
No grand and costly furnished halls,
But large enough for us and ours.

And when my daily task is done,
My children at the window wait
For my approach, and gleeful run
To meet their father at the gate.

The mother of the Gracchi led
Before the robber chief of Rome,
Her noble boys, and proudly said :
“ These are the jewels of my home ! ”

I would not reign upon a throne
Of gold, inlaid with priceless pearls,
Without the power to call my own
These bright and loving, glorious girls !

That fair and happy home within,
The mistress and the light is she,
Whose mission here has ever been
To bless and strengthen them and me ;

To make our stay on earth more bright,
And fit us for that home afar,
Of everlasting love and light,
Where all her sister angels are !

How selfish were it to repine
And count my pleasures small and few,
And when such priceless gems are mine,
Demand all other treasures too !

My inner life, to human sense,
Each single year on glancing o'er,
Would show but little difference
From what it was the year before ;

But when, to-night, a while I pause,
To look upon the past, I know
I am by no means what I was
A quarter century ago :

And now I very clearly see,
The dark, and steep, and thorny path
The hand divine laid out for me,
Was meant in love, and not in wrath.

With woes without, and foes within,
I see my early life was not
(At least, it need not to have been)
So very wretched as I thought.

Misfortune took no fiendish joy
Her special hate on me to wreak,
And crush my spirit—but the boy
Was over-sensitive and weak ;

But Heaven was kind, and ever held
And led me with unerring hand,
E'en when my blind self-will rebelled—
For then I did not understand

That strength could never be obtained
On wished-for flowery beds of ease,
Nor manliness and vigor gained
By drifting on through tranquil seas.

And when my morning sky grew dark
Beneath the Storm-god's awful frown,
Until my frail and helpless bark
Amid the waves almost went down,

And when compelled to brave the mad
And raging billows all alone—
For each imperilled comrade had
Some craft to care for of his own—

I faced the fierce and howling blast,
I bent my arm to ply the oar,
I struggled onward, and at last
Outrode the storm and reached the shore.

And now I see a glorious thing :
 (The wind was wild, the sea was wide,)
My arm grew strong in buffeting,
 Alone, the tempest and the tide.

I heed not now what storms may break,
 Though mountain-high the billows roll,
For Fate is powerless to wreck
 The strong and self-sufficing soul.

I see the baubles I have lost
 Are but the veriest dross—or worse ;
That what I loved and longed for most
 Must have become my deadliest curse.

The brightest pleasures of my life
 In pain and darkness had their birth ;
I reap from trampled fields of strife
 A harvest of surpassing worth.

The star of youthful hope is gone—
 Gone down amid the rayless night
That harbingered the golden dawn,
 And floods of unimagined light !

I know that I shall never wear
 The wreath of fame upon my brow—
But really, I do not care,
 Nor even think about it now :

I cherish no illusion bright
Within my self-excusing soul,
That but for some mischance I might
Have reached a more exalted goal ;

Not Bunyan's cell and low estate,
Not Homer's rags and sightless eyes,
Can thwart the spirit truly great,
Nor bar its passage to the skies.

The glory had been mine alone
If I had won the victor's palm ;
The fault, the failure, is my own,
That I am simply—what I am.

What then ? The lark that from the vale
Pours forth his canticle of love, —
The silver-throated nightingale
Sequestered in the shady grove, —

Their little hearts can be as glad,
And morn and evening they can sing
As joyously as if they had
A louder voice or stronger wing ;

Can warm and thrill the human breast
With more melodious delight,
Than can the eagle from his nest
Upon the frozen mountain-height !

And every person who, despite
His weakness, does the best he can
To help along the cause of right,
And benefit his fellow-man,

Can have no reason to complain
Of useless life, or low estate ;
He cannot live a day in vain—
And he is greater than the great !

Though I may occupy a place
Of quiet, humble duty now,—
Though human fingers here may trace
The sad word “ failure ” on my brow,—

I warn you, when I journey on
The scornful token will not stay ;
At earliest blush of heavenly dawn
It will forever fade away !

The radiant world to which I go
Sheds some celestial beams on this
I quaff e'en now the overflow
Of infinite and endless bliss !

I see beyond the pearly gate ;
I find my heritage so near,
I shall not stop to wish and wait,
But take my triumph now and here !

I do not now anticipate
My wife or I will care to stay
To look upon the golden mate
Of this, our silver-wedding day :

For she will take me to her home,
Beneath whose ever-shining skies
We hand in hand for aye shall roam
The purple hills of Paradise !

FOR AN AUTOGRAPH ALBUM.

MAY such enjoyments, and such woes,
Into thy life, my friend, be sent
As Heaven in kindly wisdom knows
Shall serve thy best development.

FOR A LADY'S ALBUM.

LADY, thou art young and fair ;
Be this thy first and constant care :
To gather treasures that will stay
When youth and beauty pass away.

THE POET'S REASONS.

THERE once was one whose soul was sometimes
beckoned
To heights unwonted by some purpose grand—
Yet never even dreamed of being reckoned
Among the leaders of his age or land.

Sometimes he phrased, in rhyme or rhythmic measure,
Some quaint conceit, or sentiment sublime—
Yet ne'er so much as hoped the world would treasure
His name among the poets of his time.

And once a friend of his, a gentle maiden,
Half-quizzing, asked him : " Wherefore do you write ?
Would you uplift some heart with sorrow laden,
Or win some soul to virtue, peace, and light ?

" Have you, in art, philosophy, or morals,
Some new, grand thought or lesson for mankind ?
Or would you gather Fame's unfading laurels,
And dying, leave a deathless name behind ? "

He had no answer ready for the question,
So undefined his thoughts and feelings were ;
But pondering later on the chance suggestion,
The poet thus in rhyme replied to her :

“ Fair friend, since you half-seriously propounded
The query, ‘ why I write,’ I must confess,
Most patiently, but vainly, I have sounded
The darkling depths of my own consciousness.

“ And I must tell you truly, that no reason,
No fore-wrought purpose, comes within my ken ;
To free my restless, captive thoughts from prison—
This vague, strong impulse mostly guides my pen.

“ I write not that the multitude may lavish
Their fickle tribute of applause on me ;
I know that I have not the gift to ravish
All souls with some o’ermastering melody.

“ I have not power to bid the masses linger
Who haste life’s crowded thoroughfare along,
To pause in admiration of the singer,
Or yield to the enchantment of his song.

“ The people in this world are very busy,
Each occupied with his peculiar cares—
Not purely selfish, yet it is not easy
To disengage them of their own affairs.

“ Behold, in yonder flower-bespangled meadow
Where countless hues are beautifully blent,
An ant-hill rises in an oak-tree’s shadow,
With denizens all wisely diligent.

"What music fills the air ! yet doubt I whether
They heed what melody surrounds their work—
What songs the whippoorwills rehearse together,
Or how the dawn is greeted by the lark.

"T would be conceit beyond all comprehension,
Should I my harp attune, my voice upraise,
With purpose of arresting their attention,
To win their admiration or their praise.

"No ant would for a moment cease his labor,
Or lay aside his load of seed or grain,
To comment, even to his nearest neighbor:
'That truly was a very pleasant strain !'

"As little have I hope or expectation
That yonder hurrying, eager human throng,
Struggling for food, or fame, or wealth, or station,
Will cease their striving to admire my song.

"Still less I fancy that I shall hereafter
Be named by other lips when mine are dumb ;
That words of mine shall move to tears or laughter
The hearts of generations yet to come.

"Look back a hundred years ! a few great leaders
In literature are all whose names survive ;
The poems written then that now have readers
At most will number only four or five.

"I know that fate has not seen fit to render
Me strong enough to reach that foremost place—
To over-climb, by heights of starry splendor,
The other thousand millions of my race.

"I know that wife and children bless and love me
For filling home with helpfulness and light ;
That on my bier their tears will fall above me
For what I *am*, and not for what I *write*.

"Though these some tender recollections cherish,
Yet with the multitude, as years roll on.
Erelong all memory of me shall perish
Beneath the rasure of oblivion.

"Yea, though I toil and strive beyond all measure,
To win the bright, alluring prize of fame,
And, sacrificing riches, rest, and pleasure,
Make this my one, unswerving, ceaseless aim,

"Still, notwithstanding my supreme endeavor,
The same if I am satisfied or not,
One destiny, avoidless, fronts me ever—
To die, and then be utterly forgot.

"Nor, lady, have I ever dared to borrow
A gleam of comfort from the sweet belief
That words of mine might lighten some one's sorrow,
Or brighten any cloud of gloom or grief.

" The pain that comes of being cloyed of pleasure,
Vague, sentimental, and factitious woes,
Thin clouds of shadow on a sky of azure,
Might fade before a poem, I suppose ;

" But griefs that darken all the heavens above us :
A drunken husband, or a faithless wife ;
Disease that on the hands of those who love us
Leaves us a burden for the rest of life ;

" To suffer, or to see our loved ones suffer,
Foul fraud, for which there can be no redress—
Our life-long earnings in some Shylock's coffer,
Our wan-eyed children wailing supperless ;

" For griefs that sting like barbs of poisoned arrows,
Forever rankling in the heart and brain ;
For real, and deep, and ever-present sorrows,
The deftliest woven words are worse than vain.

" Nor, lady, in philosophy or morals
Have I a lesson new or strange to teach ;
I have no taste for theologic quarrels,
And metaphysics are beyond my reach.

" Nor did I ever write a line foreseeing
Or purposing that what I then should write
Should help the world, or any human being,
Or serve to strengthen them in doing right.

" Shall I presume, so void of inspiration,
Myself a weary wanderer in the night,
To cry : ' Behold, I have a revelation ! '
 ' Here is the road, and yonder is the light ! '

" Alas ! with my own faith so faint and meager,
My words of weak half-courage could but mock
The warm desire of others who are eager
 To have their feet firm-planted on a rock.

" So weak and short-lived is my best emotion,
Attaining heights heroic but to fall,
How can I wake the fervor of devotion
 In hearts where self and sense are all in all !

" But many things, my friend, we do unbidden,
Unmindful of a special, definite goal ;
And thus I may in part explain what hidden
 Or half-unconscious impulse stirred my soul :

" If this wee floweret by the wayside growing
Were an intelligent and sentient thing,
I fancy some one might insist on knowing
 Just what its reasons were for blossoming.

" I fancy that the flower might answer truly :
 ' When, welcoming the sunshine and the dew,
My variegated petals opened newly,
 'T was with no special, far-off end in view.

“ ‘ It surely was not in anticipation
That many, or that one, in passing by,
Might pause before me, lost in admiration,
And possibly, “ How beautiful ! ” might cry.

“ ‘ Nor yet was it because I was persuaded
That those who saw me would, for many a year,
Recall how fair I was before I faded,
And o’er my memory drop affection’s tear.

“ ‘ Nor yet because I felt myself possessing
The power to soothe, and cheer, and heal ; and
through
My beauty and my fragrance prove a blessing
To many a heart whose founts of joy were few.

“ ‘ Nor was it yet because of my foreseeing
That I might lead some nature, coarse and dull,
Up to the worship of the glorious Being
Whose hand had made me bright and beautiful.

“ ‘ I blossomed, not for reasons thus presented,
But simply that it was my nature’s need ;
Something within me would not rest contented
With being nothing but a common weed.

“ ‘ Color, and form, and fragrance—something told me—
Were part of my Creator’s generous plan ;
And gratefully I said, I will unfold me
In all the grace and loveliness I can.

“ ‘Yea, though my home were deep within the bosom
Of some bleak wilderness, or desert bare
Untrod by man, still would I bud and blossom,
And shed my fragrance on the heedless air.

“ ‘Bright visions of the perfect ever win me,
Which I obey, as ’t were the voice of God—
Transmuting, by the powers that dwell within me,
To beauteous forms the black insensate clod.’

“My friend, if what the little flower advances
Appears to you a fit and fair reply,
Thus have my varied feelings, thoughts, and fancies
Been given expression—with no reason why.

“Doubt not that fondly, gratefully, I cherish
The kind opinion of my fellow-men ;
Deem not the prospect pleases me to perish,
And all the world forget that I had been.

“To sooth one pang by words that I could utter,
To me were happiness without alloy ;
To make the world, or any being, better,
Would flood my soul with never-ceasing joy ;

“I would be glad to please or bless my brothers
By any thought or feeling I express—
Yet mainly for myself, and not for others,
I ’ve clothed my musings in poetic dress.

"Some hope or longing, joy or aspiration,
Mood or emotion, humorous or sublime,
Wail of despair, or thrill of exultation,
I uttered—heedless who might read my rhyme.

"When faith and hope foretold a pleasing story,
And peace and light upon my spirit stole,
I sought some way to mirror forth the glory
That thrilled and gladdened my responsive soul.

"When joy and trust were dead, and hope was dying,
Sometimes I struck a light and merry strain,
As persons laugh to keep themselves from crying,
And jest with lips all quivering with pain.

"When sickness came and nights of wakeful anguish,
I said : ' I will beguile my weariness
By writing something, while in pain I languish,
I ne'er had thought of but for this distress.'

"When drudging for my bread, and sinking under
The double weight of toil and misery,
I bade my Spirit burst her bands asunder,
And soar, and sing the anthem of the free !

"I said : ' Though disappointments be repeated,
Till hope and energy and life are gone,
Yet is my Soul not utterly defeated—
Still shall she stand erect, and still sing on ! '

SONS OF LOVE AND TRIUMPH.

'A thought in home were deep within the bosom
Of some bleak wilderness, or desert bare
None to mark or would I bud and blossom,
And shed my fragrance on the heedless air.

'I would not that the perfect ever win me,
Nor that I were the slave of God—
I would not that the powers that dwell within me,
Should ever turn the thankless ungrateful clod.'

'I would not that the little flower attitudes
Should ever turn the thankless ungrateful clod.
I would not that the powers that dwell within me,
Should ever turn the thankless ungrateful clod.

'I would not that the powers that dwell within me,
Should ever turn the thankless ungrateful clod.
I would not that the powers that dwell within me,
Should ever turn the thankless ungrateful clod.

'I would not that the powers that I could utter,
To me were happiness without alloy;
To make the world or any being better
Would bind my soul with never-ceasing

'I would be glad to please or bless
By any thought or feeling I express
Not making me myself, and not for
If we should any music make

THE POET'S REACTION.

"The light of truth, my vision
 For a moment, glorious as the sun,
 Was mine, and then, in darkness,
 I saw the light of truth again."

"The light of truth upon my spirit stole,
 And then, as if to mirror forth the glory
 That shone within, my responsive soul

"The light of truth was dead, and hope was dead,
 And then, as if to mirror forth the glory
 That shone within, my responsive soul

"The light of truth was dead, and hope was dead,
 And then, as if to mirror forth the glory
 That shone within, my responsive soul

"The light of truth was dead, and hope was dead,
 And then, as if to mirror forth the glory
 That shone within, my responsive soul

"I said : ' Though fate my will may overmaster,
Not pain, nor poverty, nor prison bars,
No loss, and no conceivable disaster,
Shall wholly shut my spirit from the stars.'

"Amid surroundings that I loathed and hated,
I said : ' E'en here, where all is foul and low,
Shall something bright and joyous be created,
As fairest flowers from foulest soils may grow.'

"Sometimes I found my way so rough and dreary,
Awhile I lost all courage, hope, and faith ;
Of conflict, toil, and pain became so weary,
I wept, and passionately prayed for death.

"Sometimes I found myself receding slowly
Toward selfish aims, and coarse, ignoble strife ;
And then I cried : ' O Spirit Pure and Holy,
Send me the strength to lead a better life !'

"Then ministering angels came and found me :
I could not see them, for the blinding tears ;
I felt their strong and loving arms around me,
And their celestial music charmed my ears ;

"Their tones of tenderness my memory haunted—
I sought to syllable their song again ;
For my rapt soul would fain be re-enchanted
By some faint echo of that far-off strain.

“What I have written, though the world ignore it,
Has brought me joy the world can never give—
For I am happier and better for it,
And know I always shall be, while I live.

“Thus to myself my muse has proved already
A balm, a blessing, and a pure delight :
And thus I truthfully have answered, lady,
The question that you asked me—why I write.”

THE END.

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DATE MAY 2 1980

